



CHELSEA VISION PLAN

2012 Sasaki Intern Charrette
City of Chelsea, MA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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2012 Summer Intern Charrette

S A S A K I





◀ *The Tobin Bridge remains a common factor among the issues Chelsea currently faces.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chelsea Design Charrette 2012

Once home to expansive farmland, the City of Chelsea is located in the Boston Harbor adjacent to Everett (northwest) and Revere (northeast). With the Mystic River to the west and Chelsea Creek to the east, the city connects with its surroundings through a series of bridges. The Tobin Bridge, erected in 1950, is the main route connecting Chelsea to Boston.

In contrast to its purpose of connecting Boston to its surroundings, the Tobin Bridge acts as a barrier that stretches through the middle of Chelsea, bisecting the city. This bisection of a city formed a physical and psychological barrier disrupting the connections and flow of the community. Although in its current state the Tobin Bridge poses many issues, the bridge holds many opportunities to transform into a hub of activities and celebrate the history and culture of a present-day Chelsea.

The Chelsea Vision Plan proposes an idea to reconnect the city and restore a vibrant, exciting community through the revitalization of Downtown and Broadway, the establishment of connections through a network of programs and open spaces, and a celebration of the Tobin Bridge. The plan focuses on an economic anchor (the local Market Basket) and seeks to lead new, pedestrian-oriented development. The Sasaki Associates summer intern design team, with the consultation of Sasaki professionals and the City of Chelsea, completed The Chelsea Vision Plan over the course of a two week design charrette.

The plan analyzes Chelsea's major concerns and introduces strategies to alleviate the pressure of the Tobin Bridge. The Chelsea Vision Plan highlights the topics of walkability, community development, connectivity, and pedestrian oriented economic development. In addition to a master framework plan, these topics provide opportunities to develop detailed proposals that reshape and redefine important nodes in the city and transform these nodes into hubs of cultural activity with both temporary and permanent program. The combination of large-scale framework proposals and smaller, intimate design alternatives establish a strong, cohesive vision to propel Chelsea forward and establish the city as a premier gateway to Boston.

The Charrette Process



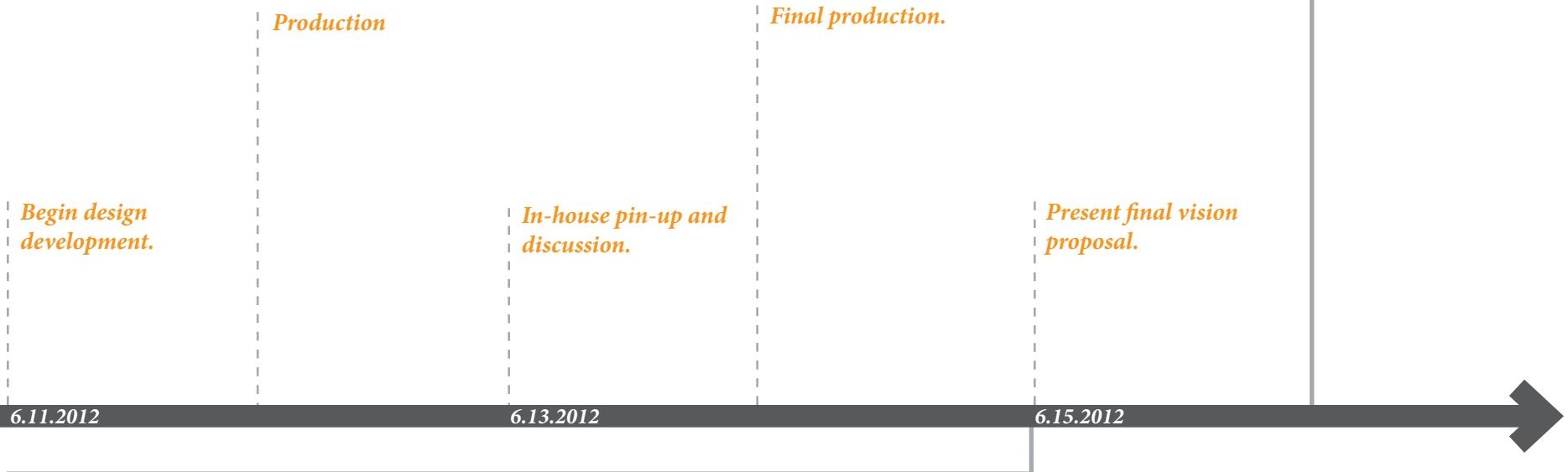
Week 1

After becoming acclimated to the office atmosphere and attending an initial kick-off meeting, the intern design team conducted a site visit and took some time to meet with city officials in Chelsea to discuss the charrette's goals and objectives. The team then began an analysis process to uncover key issues within the urban context. Major issues included connectivity, community and cultural development, walkability and circulation, public safety, areas of opportunity, and land use. After some initial concept development, the team presented their ideas to Chelsea city officials and employees at Sasaki in a presentation featuring the overall design concept of increased connectivity of Chelsea through walkable environments, cultural development, and distinct circulatory paths.

6.5.2012	6.6.2012	6.7.2012	6.8.2012
<i>Kick-off meeting and site visit in Chelsea.</i>	<i>In-house pin-up.</i>		<i>Present initial findings and concepts.</i>
<i>Begin analysis.</i>		<i>Begin concept development.</i>	

Community Presentation

The intern design team will present the work to the city manager and officials of Chelsea on July 24, 2012.



Week 2

After the presentation in Week 1, the team unpacked comments and suggestions from the audience to develop a clear, over-arching theme for the design. When the design's framework was established, the team extracted the key elements of the framework and further developed the elements in small groups. The final presentation to Chelsea city officials and Sasaki professionals featured personal connections to Chelsea, an overall framework master plan, and proposals for both small, intimate areas and larger, conceptual districts within Chelsea.

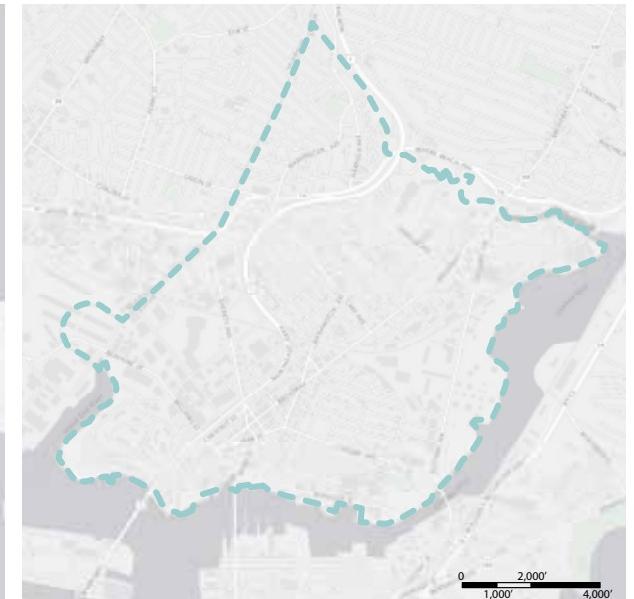


INTRODUCTION TO CHELSEA

Two miles from Boston and three miles from Logan International Airport, the City of Chelsea boasts a large amount of waterfront along the Mystic River and Chelsea Creek. One of the oldest settlements in the commonwealth, Chelsea has evolved into an urban community containing a multitude of ethnicities and boasting a diverse and lively atmosphere. As waterfront and port industry rose, the City of Chelsea flourished and established a large amount of waterfront industry. Today, the industry has faded and left an underperforming industrial wasteland in its wake with vast surface parking lots and tall fences blocking the view of the water. In addition to its port industry, Chelsea relies on the food industry, and among these economic giants is Kayem (the meat processing factory serving Fenway Park). Chelsea's diversity, industrial uses, and iconic infrastructural elements like the Tobin Bridge, established Chelsea's identity and shaped both residents' and outsiders' attitudes of the city.

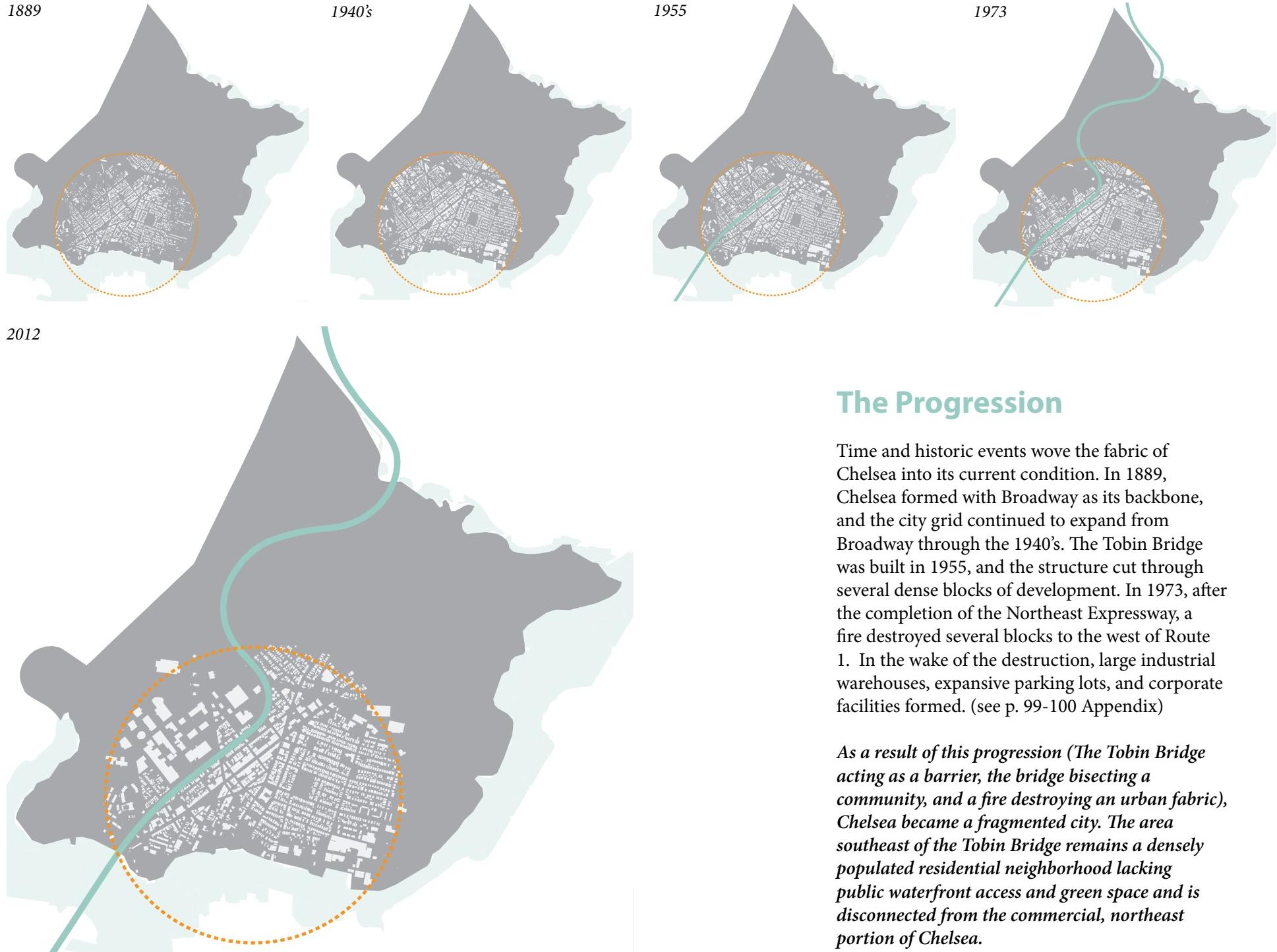


◀ *Historic Chelsea.*



City of Chelsea. ▶

Chester in relation to Boston. ▶

A series of maps of Chelsea, Massachusetts, illustrating its growth and fragmentation over time. The maps are arranged in two rows. The top row shows five points in time: 1889, 1940's, 1955, 1973, and 2012. Each map features a grey silhouette of the town's boundary and a light blue area representing water. A green dotted circle highlights a central residential area. In 1889, the green circle is small. By 1940's, it has grown significantly. In 1955, a teal line representing the Tobin Bridge cuts through the green circle. In 1973, a fire leads to further fragmentation. The bottom row shows the progression from 1955 to 2012. In 1955, the green circle is bisected by the bridge. By 2012, the green circle has expanded and shifted, indicating continued urban sprawl and fragmentation.
1889

1940's

1955

1973

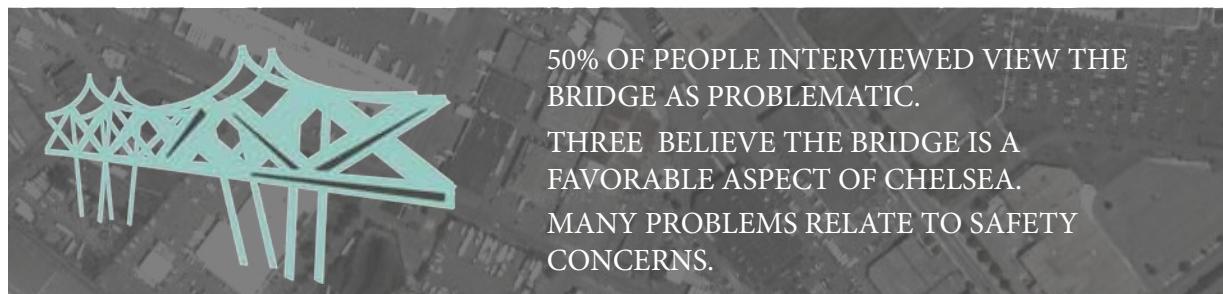
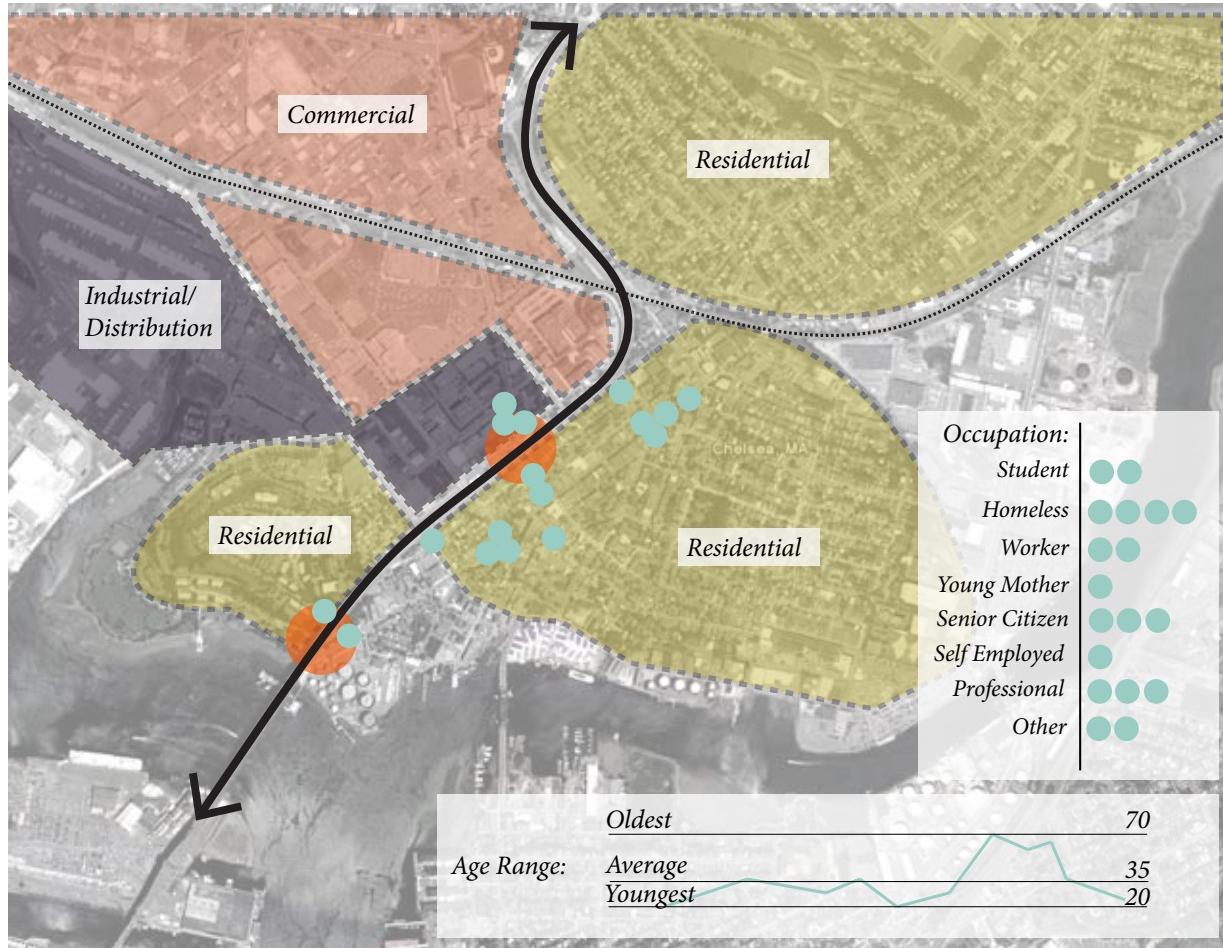
2012

The Progression

Time and historic events wove the fabric of Chelsea into its current condition. In 1889, Chelsea formed with Broadway as its backbone, and the city grid continued to expand from Broadway through the 1940's. The Tobin Bridge was built in 1955, and the structure cut through several dense blocks of development. In 1973, after the completion of the Northeast Expressway, a fire destroyed several blocks to the west of Route 1. In the wake of the destruction, large industrial warehouses, expansive parking lots, and corporate facilities formed. (see p. 99-100 Appendix)

As a result of this progression (The Tobin Bridge acting as a barrier, the bridge bisecting a community, and a fire destroying an urban fabric), Chelsea became a fragmented city. The area southeast of the Tobin Bridge remains a densely populated residential neighborhood lacking public waterfront access and green space and is disconnected from the commercial, northeast portion of Chelsea.





▲ Top: Illustrates general land use districts and location and demographics of personal interviews.

Bottom / Top Right: General attitudes of those interviewed.

Chelsea Residents

As illustrated by the map (left), Chelsea's residents are located east of the Tobin Bridge (with the exception of the residents living in the Admiral Hill district near Mary O'Malley Park). The markers on the map indicate the locations of interviews with Chelsea residents, and the keys contain information about those interviewed. The interviews proved useful in determining local attitudes about Chelsea, especially those relating to the Tobin Bridge. Through the interview process, the team discovered many Chelsea residents do not view the bridge as a favorable aspect of the city (left).

In addition to uncovering resident's attitudes about the Tobin Bridge, it is also important to understand the history and demographics of the residents of Chelsea. Following a steady decline after the Great Depression, the population of Chelsea began to increase in 1980. As Chelsea continues to develop and establish more amenities and housing options, the population will continue to increase.

Another unique aspect of Chelsea is the diversity of its residents. Among the households in Chelsea, 66% of families speak a language other than English in the home (below). This number is much higher than Chelsea's benchmark cities, including its neighbors Everett and Revere, and the number is drastically higher than the Massachusetts average. A person's ethnicity and culture is a major factor dictating a person's daily actions, daily activities, and attitudes of a place; and the diversity of Chelsea is important because it adds to the cultural richness of the city.

Chelsea's culture and diverse population offer a variety of opportunities to enrich the city of Chelsea through design. Embracing the residents of Chelsea and understanding general attitudes and needs of the people helped inform and shape the team's vision of Chelsea.



▲ *Chelsea Population.*

▲ *Language Other Than English Spoken at Home.*



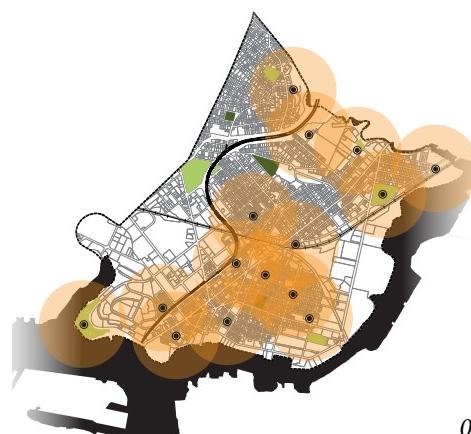
► Exploded axonometric illustrates the distribution of pervious to impervious surfaces. The top layer is green space (pervious), while the lower layers are paved and other impervious surfaces.

Current Surface and Walkability Conditions

▼ Series of maps describe walking radii from open space. The open space is organized by targeted age groups.

Chelsea's small area and large population affect the current surface conditions of the city. In order to accommodate a large number of people in Massachusetts's smallest city (1.86 square miles), dense housing is needed. The drawing on the left illustrates the distribution of building footprints, surface parking and paved surfaces, and pervious surfaces or green space. The space not occupied by buildings is largely comprised of paved surfaces and surface parking lots, and only a small percentage of the distribution is green space. The addition of more pervious surfaces will improve walkability conditions and the quality of life in Chelsea.

An evaluation of existing pervious surfaces, isolating spaces with high-use versus underutilized spaces, presents an opportunity to redistribute uses of existing green space. The series of maps below describe current age groups associated with recreational parks in Chelsea and quarter mile walking radii associated with each area. The maps indicate a large portion of recreational parks in Chelsea are targeted to children under the age of five. As the ages in the groups increase, the amount of available space decreases. Recreational parks serving different age groups are more effective if they are evenly distributed throughout a city, and eliminating the gaps illustrated by the maps will improve Chelsea's park system. Highlighting underutilized spaces and re-purposing the spaces to appeal to another age demographic may be an alternate strategy to the addition of recreational parks and green space.



0-5 years



5-12 years



12+ years



Fig. 1: Proximity to Commuter Rail



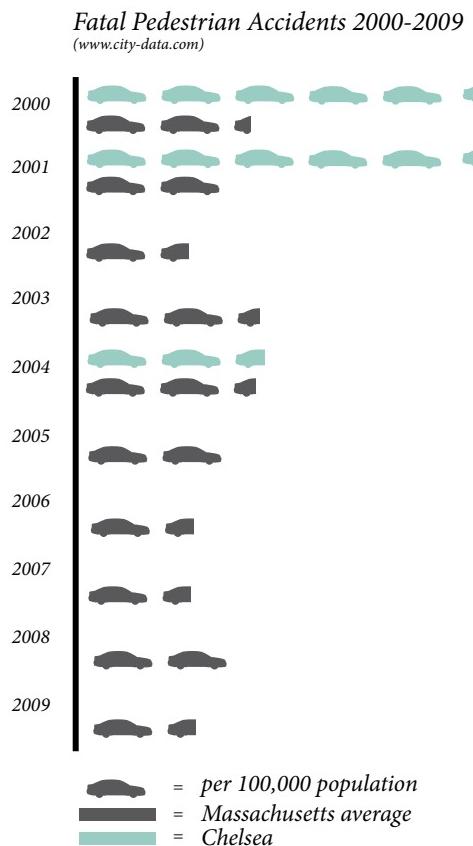
Fig. 2: Transit Proximity to Major Sectors



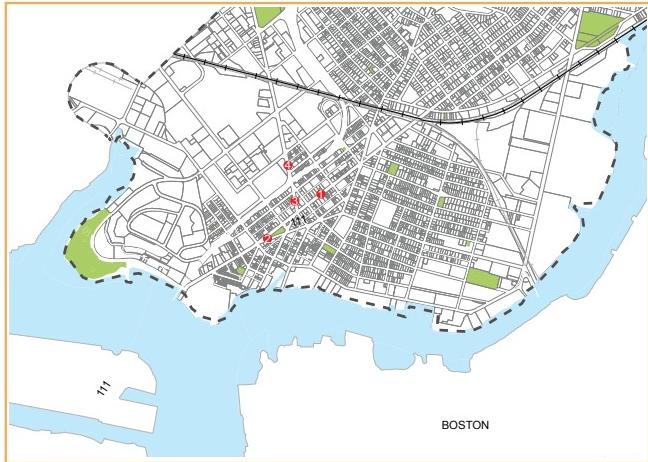
Fig. 3: Existing Walking Routes



Fig. 4: Major Local Roadways



Because of Chelsea's small surface area and large population, the need for safe, walkable sidewalks and streets is vital. The majority of Chelsea residents walk to local amenities, and the streets of Chelsea are constantly occupied by a large number of pedestrians. The commuter rail in Chelsea is in close proximity to a large portion of residential neighborhoods, and the majority of bus stops within the city are near major city centers like Broadway, the Mystic Mall area, and Mary O'Malley Park and Admiral Hill (Figures 1 and 2). Figure 3 (above) highlights the existing walking routes in Chelsea, and Figure 4 (above) illustrates roads with high traffic volumes. An overlap occurs between both Figures 3 and 4, and a large portion of the existing walking routes are adjacent to heavily trafficked roads. This overlap presents a safety concern, and the chart (left) shows pedestrians involved in fatal accidents. The pedestrian related accidents may be attributed to negligence on either the driver, pedestrian, or both, but future accidents may be preventable through the implementation of a safer streetscape. The current Chelsea street conditions are comprised of narrow sidewalks, absence of bike lanes, wide roads with heavy traffic, and narrow roads with heavy traffic. The street sections (right) demonstrate the need to establish wider sidewalks, add vegetation buffers, and create bike lanes to ensure safer, walkable environments for the residents of Chelsea.

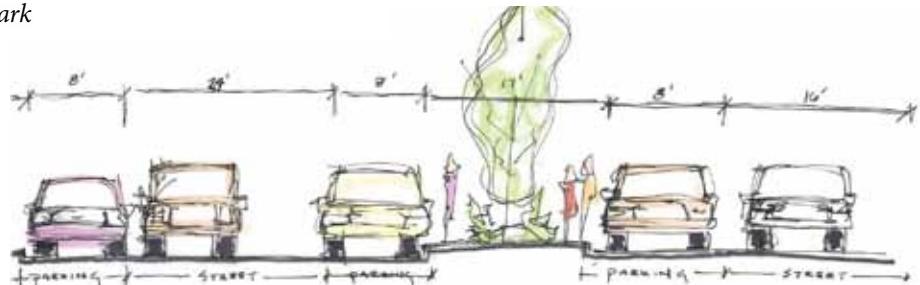


Map highlights locations of street sections. ▲
Existing street sections describe problematic vehicular to ▶
pedestrian relationships.

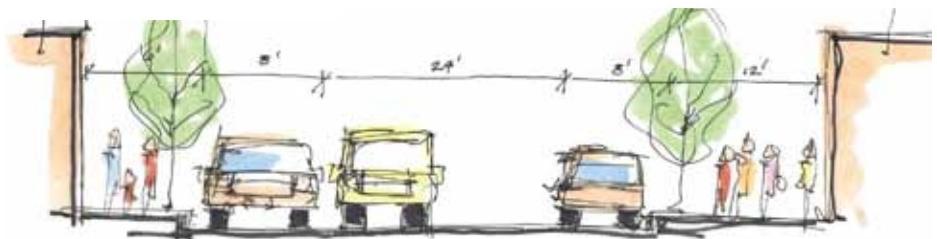
1. Broadway Profile



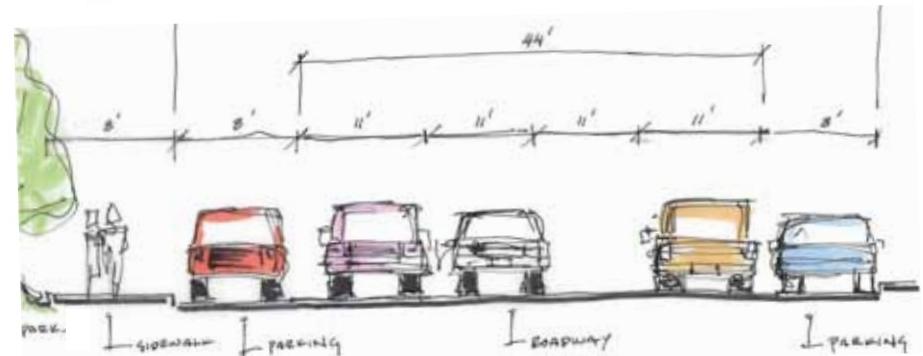
2. Broadway and Park



3. Everett East of Tobin Bridge



4. Everett West of Tobin Bridge



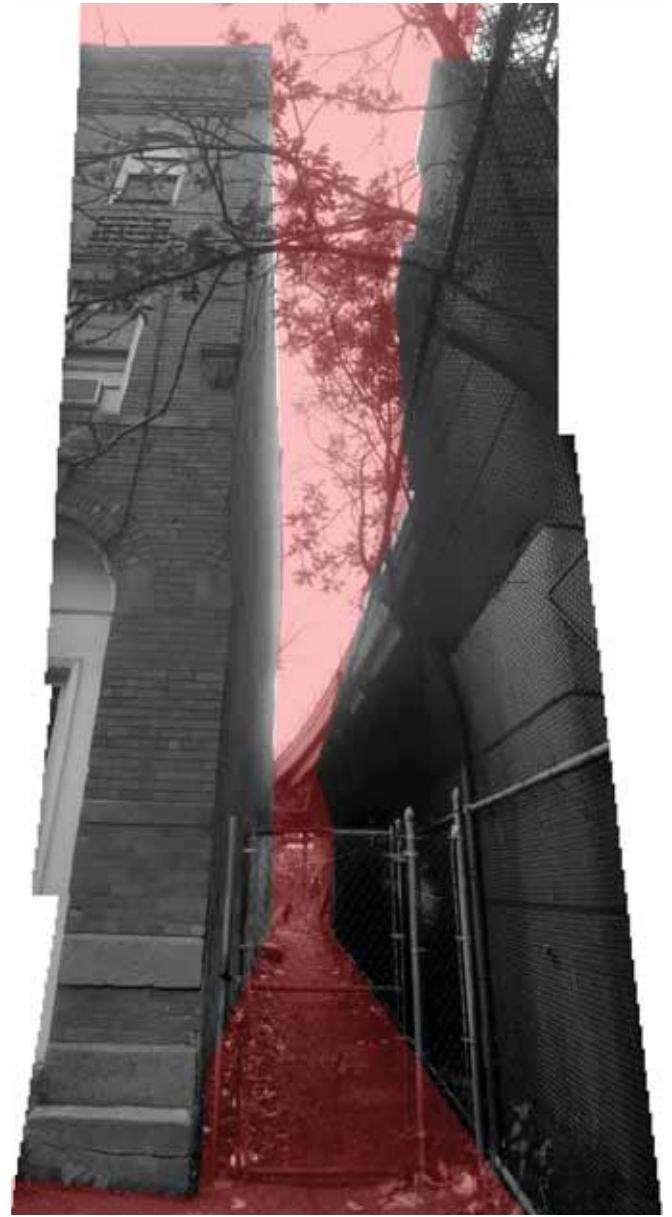




◀ Williams Street.



◀ Spruce Street.



- ▲ Top: Illustrates the in-between existing spatial condition between the residential units on Fourth Street and the Tobin Bridge
- ◀ Left: Walnut Street and Fifth Street existing pedestrian passage and spatial condition underneath the Tobin Bridge.

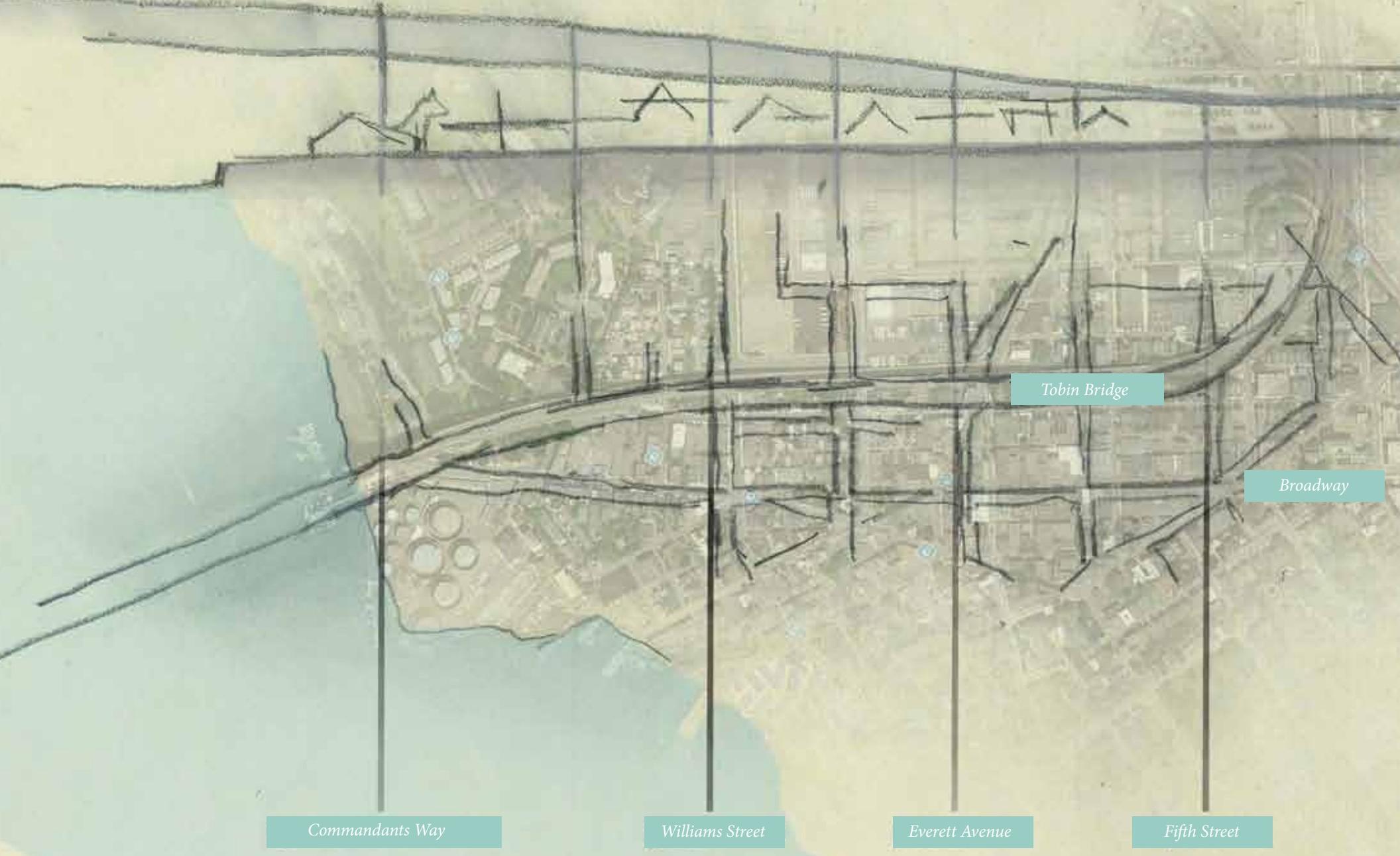
Existing Spatial Conditions

The two photos (left) depict the Tobin Bridge and existing spatial conditions underneath and around the bridge. The scale of the bridge to pedestrians is a critical issue, and the close proximity of existing buildings to the bridge in certain locations, such as Fourth Street, is unsafe.

The diagram to the right illustrates points where pedestrians encounter and pass through the bridge. The diagram also illustrates the existing spatial differences of the grid of the city. The east and west sides of Chelsea are distinguishable by a different grid structure.



Diagrams illustrate the access points and nodes of focus under the Tobin Bridge.





Spruce Street



Section Plan Study





THE VISION FRAMEWORK

Engaging and celebrating the Tobin Bridge will establish safer, walkable environments and foster community development and connectivity.

The City of Chelsea is searching for strategies and plans aimed at restoring the urban fabric and rejuvenating lost connections between the city's residents and its commercial amenities. In its current state, the Tobin Bridge forms a barrier between the residential and commercial hubs, both physically and psychologically. The Vision Framework establishes a clear set of strategies and ideas aimed at addressing these key issues through design. The plan strives to eliminate the barrier of the bridge and reconnect the residential and commercial hubs. The strategy of engaging and celebrating the Tobin Bridge will establish safer, walkable environments and foster community development and connectivity.

The strategies of The Vision Framework are to embrace the bridge and identify key nodes, establish primary and secondary circulation "loops," and define a long-term focus. These strategies help formulate and drive the design and ideas in the plan.

The goals of the framework and overall design are to establish safer, walkable environments, foster community development, and enhance connections between hubs of activity. These goals will manifest themselves first through the celebration of the Tobin Bridge, and later through defined circulation loops and clear long-term strategies. Eliminating the psychological and physical barrier of the Tobin Bridge, addressing key safety issues of the bridge and surrounding area, and establishing walkable environments will revitalize Chelsea and re-shape attitudes about the city.



Embrace the Bridge and Identify Key Nodes

To overcome the existing attitudes about the Tobin Bridge, the framework embraces the bridge and establishes it as an identifier of Chelsea. Strategies to address safety issues and transform the bridge into a more inviting and less ominous feature of the city include art installations on the structure, improving its exterior ambiance, a pedestrian friendly marsupial bridge (see p. 106 Appendix), and location of both permanent and temporary program underneath the bridge at major penetrations or nodes. Identifying key moments of penetration based on pedestrian and traffic access determined these nodes.



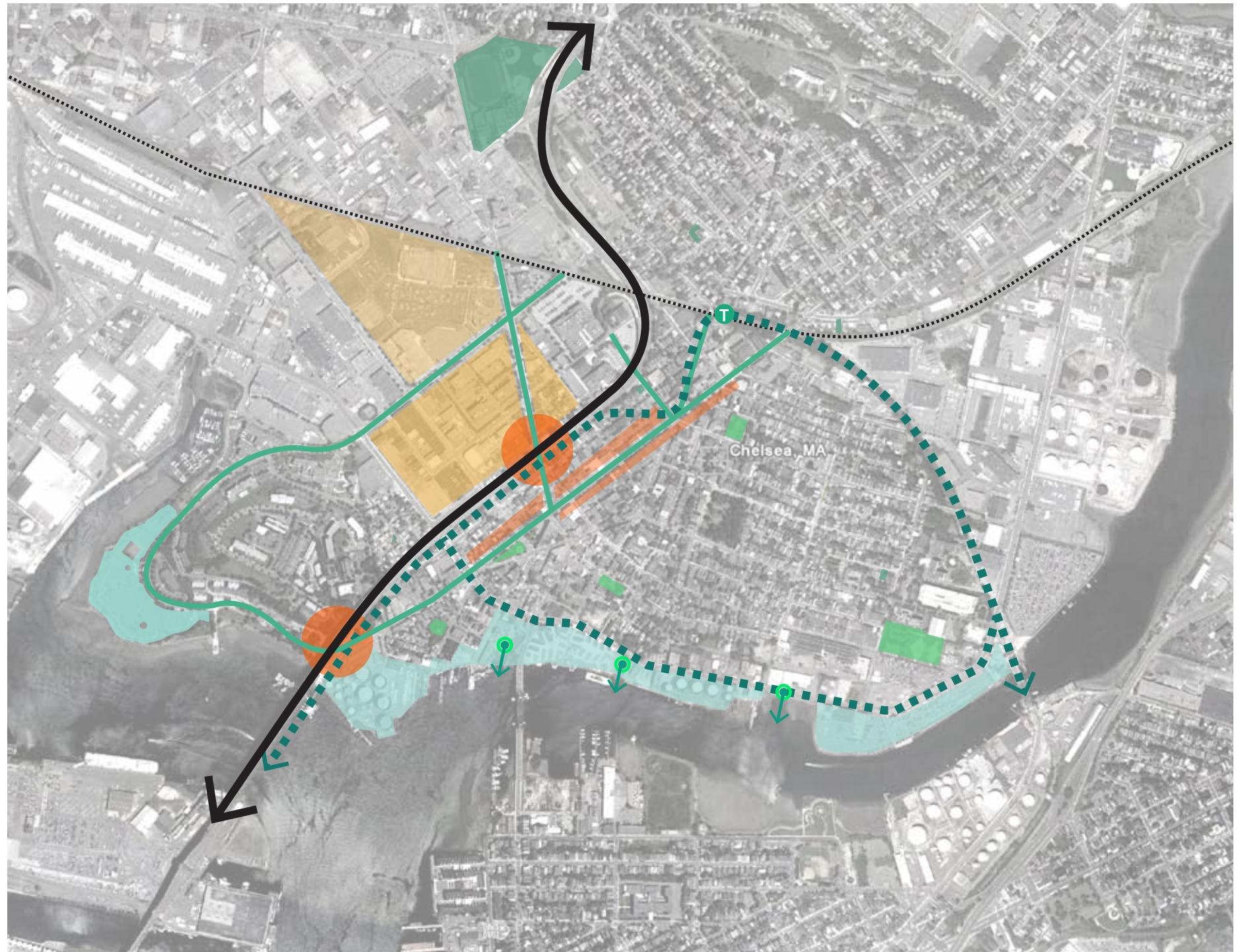
Establish Primary and Secondary Circulation “Loops”

Another element of the framework is the implementation of major circulation pathways or “loops.” Major city centers and amenities determined the location of the loops, and primary and secondary pathways organize these loops. The primary loop connects Mary O’Malley Park, Broadway, and the Mystic Mall area. This loop includes the identified nodes underneath the bridge and is the site of the framework’s major streetscape interventions. The secondary loop takes advantage of the existing green belt in Chelsea and provides connections to Chelsea’s waterfront through small interventions and improved streetscapes. The goal of this loop is to provide structure and connect Chelsea residents to recreation space, small waterfront access points, and tap into the proposed marsupial bridge beneath the Tobin Bridge.



Define Long-Term Focus

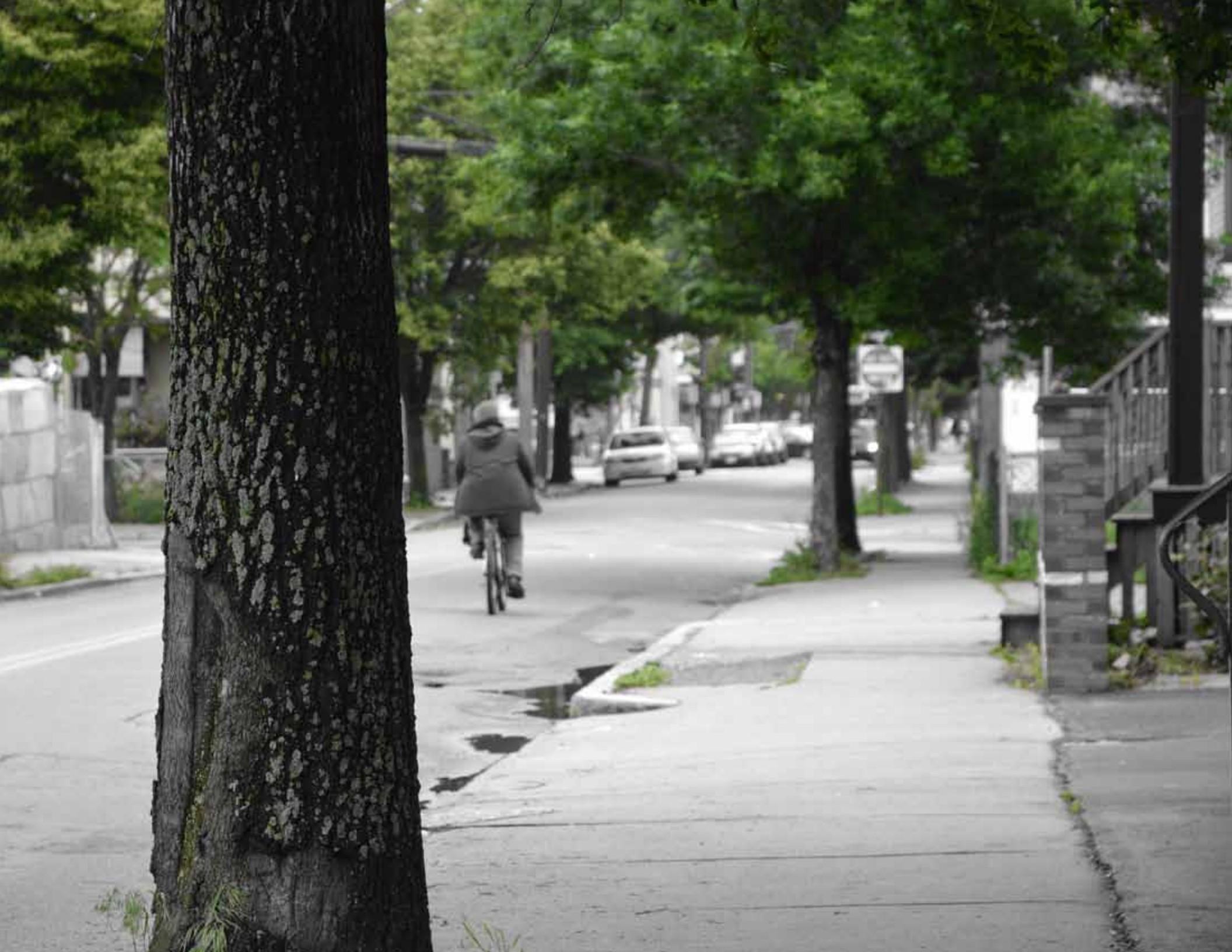
In addition to providing temporary, easily implemented program, the framework considers longer-term development. The area west of the Tobin Bridge provides opportunities to create denser, pedestrian-friendly urban fabric. The plan is geared toward enticing both Chelsea residents and outsiders to enter the area for prolonged activities beyond shopping at the local Market Basket. The framework also identifies a plan for permanent waterfront access in Chelsea. The smaller waterfront access points will be replaced with permanent, long-term waterfront access.





The Master Plan

The Master Plan for the City of Chelsea combines the goals of the framework and illustrates those goals in a comprehensive fashion. The plan highlights the major areas of focus and demonstrates the overall vision for Chelsea. The key nodes beneath the Tobin Bridge are developed with both temporary and permanent program. The circulation loops are visible through the increased amount of street trees and green space, and the plan portrays the development of the area west of the Tobin Bridge.

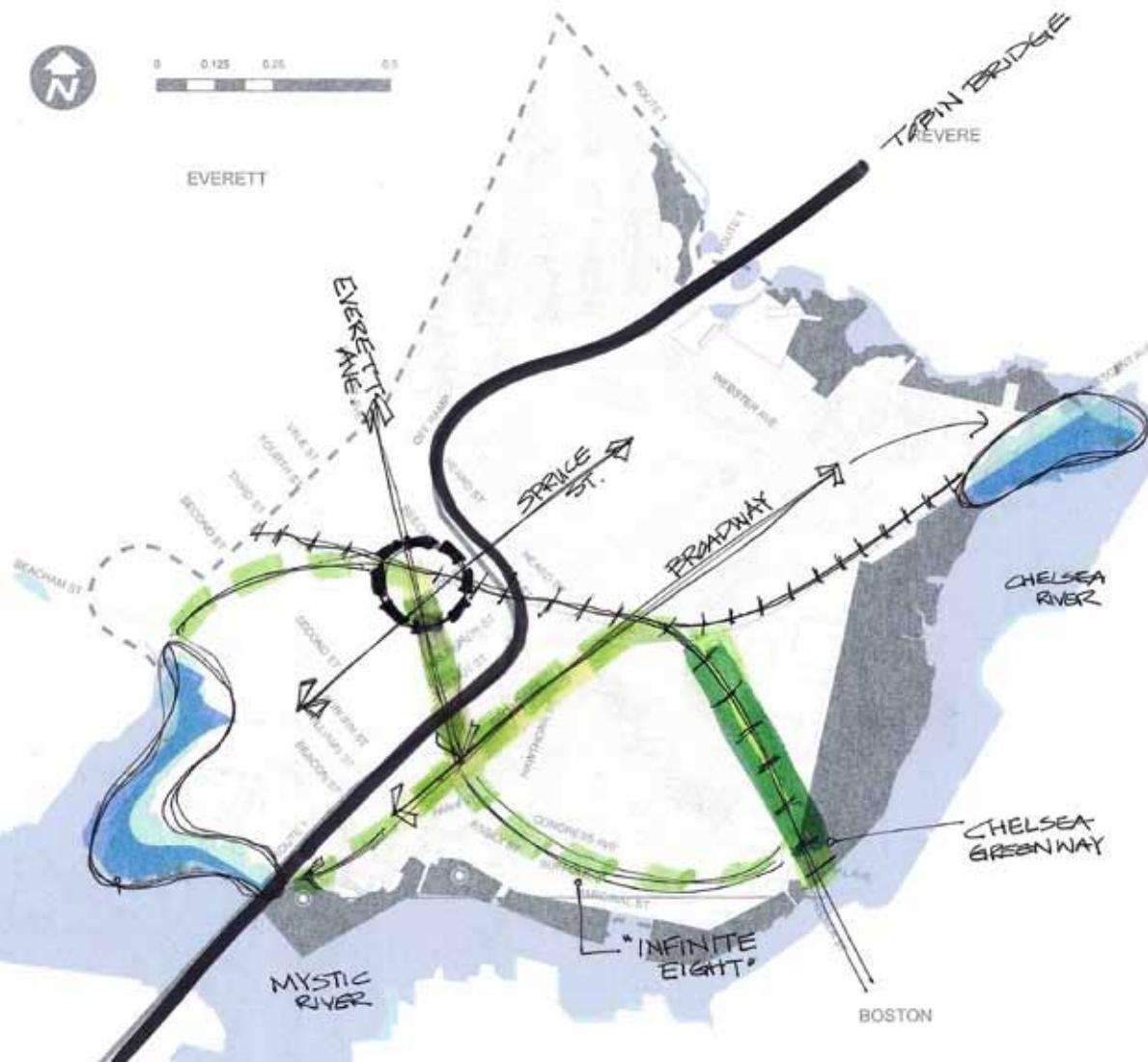


THE LOOP

Chelsea boasts many amenities available to its residents, but those amenities are scattered throughout the city lacking a comprehensive structure. Rather than viewing them as isolated instances throughout the city, the loop aims to connect these amenities to serve both Chelsea residents and visitors. Because the main points of interest are spread around the city and no defined area of concentrated activity exists, the whole city becomes the actor in the creation of the loop.

The loop intends to draw people from place to place by connecting amenities and activities. The loop may act as a means of transportation or an extended recreational track with many purposes (biking, running, walking, skating, etc). The loop establishes itself as an extended path traveling throughout the city allowing for several different modes of transportation.

The loop weaves the City of Chelsea together through circulatory paths that bridge amenities and connect Chelsea at the ground level.



▲ The Infinite Loop establishes walkable and bikeable connections to Chelsea amenities.

The Infinite Loop

The Infinite Loop allows pedestrian to access main locations throughout the city and acts as an element tying two neighborhoods together. It allows one to experience the many characteristics of the city: Broadway, a bike trail, the waterfront, Market Basket, and the Tobin Bridge, while serving as a recreational path allowing the user to experience Chelsea from the street.

The primary loop draws connections between Downtown Chelsea, Mary O'Malley Park, and the Market Basket area. For many people who travel to Chelsea, the main destination is the Market Basket. The primary loop intends to present a clear circulation path able to draw people to the waterfront and experience Downtown Chelsea's cultural richness. The loop not only aims to bring visitors into Chelsea, but also provides a cohesive path for Chelsea residents.

▼ Bottom Left: A primary circulation loop connects Broadway, Everett Avenue, and Mary O'Malley Park.

Bottom Right: A secondary circulation loop provides a long term solution to provide Chelsea with waterfront access, circulation along an existing green belt, and connections to the greater Boston area.





The Salt Pile

The salt pile is among the existing, iconic points of interest located along the secondary loop. Possible features of the loop include a bike lane, wider sidewalks, addition of street trees, and public art along the pathway. The improved environment along the loop will promote use and establish connections to Chelsea amenities.



R
P
C

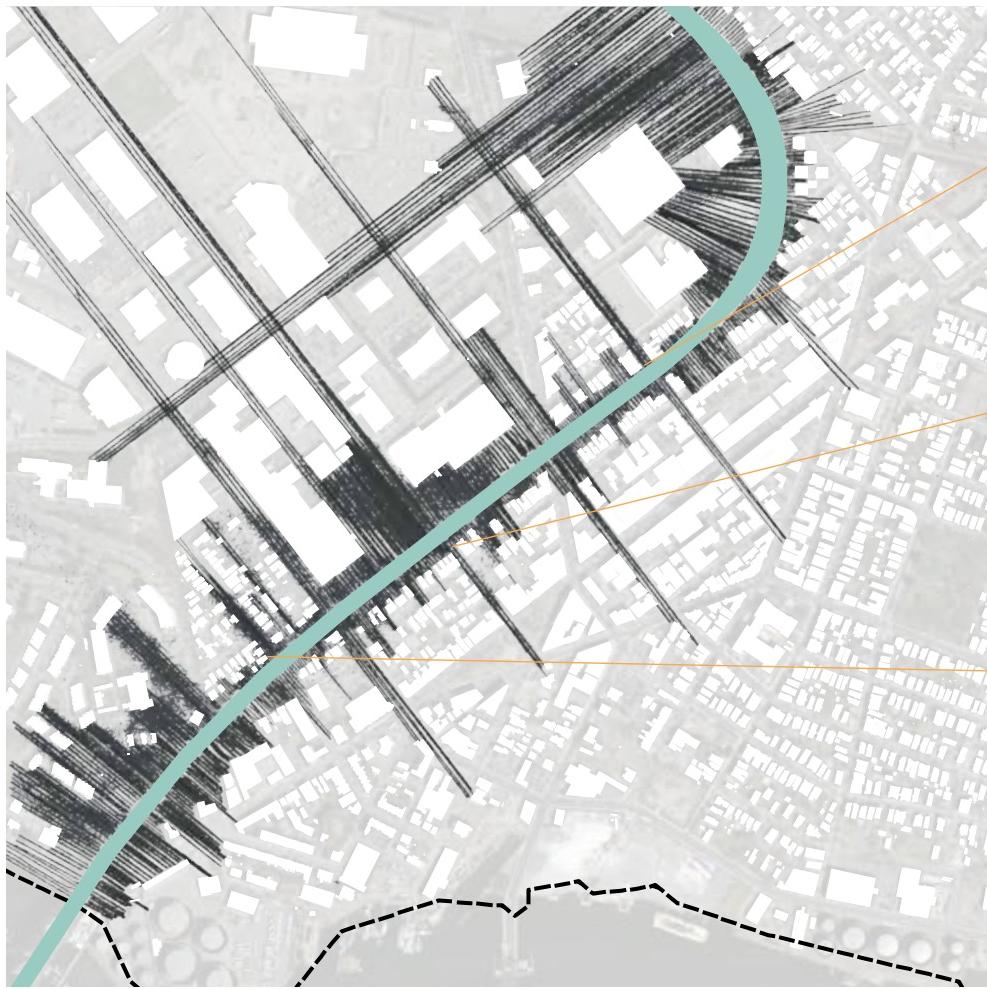
SNOW
EMERGENCY
ARTERY
NO PARKING
TOW ZONE
RENT
STICKER
PARKING



THE BRIDGE

The Tobin Bridge is a major infrastructural element of Chelsea and is visible from virtually everywhere in the city. Because of its strong presence, the framework of this proposal looks to the bridge as an icon and defining characteristic of Chelsea. In its current state, the bridge acts as both a psychological and physical barrier and raises concern about safety, connectivity, and aesthetics. From major cosmetic alterations to subtle, temporary installments, a new life will be brought to the bridge transforming it into the centerpiece of Chelsea and creating a dynamic experience for the residents as well as the passers-throughs. This proposal recognizes strategic nodes, view corridors, and underutilized space beneath the bridge to develop design alternatives that will encourage travel through, toward, and along the structure. With these interventions the Tobin Bridge will be reborn as a positive identity for the city of Chelsea and a source of pride for its residents.





▲ Building density and open space along bridge corridor.

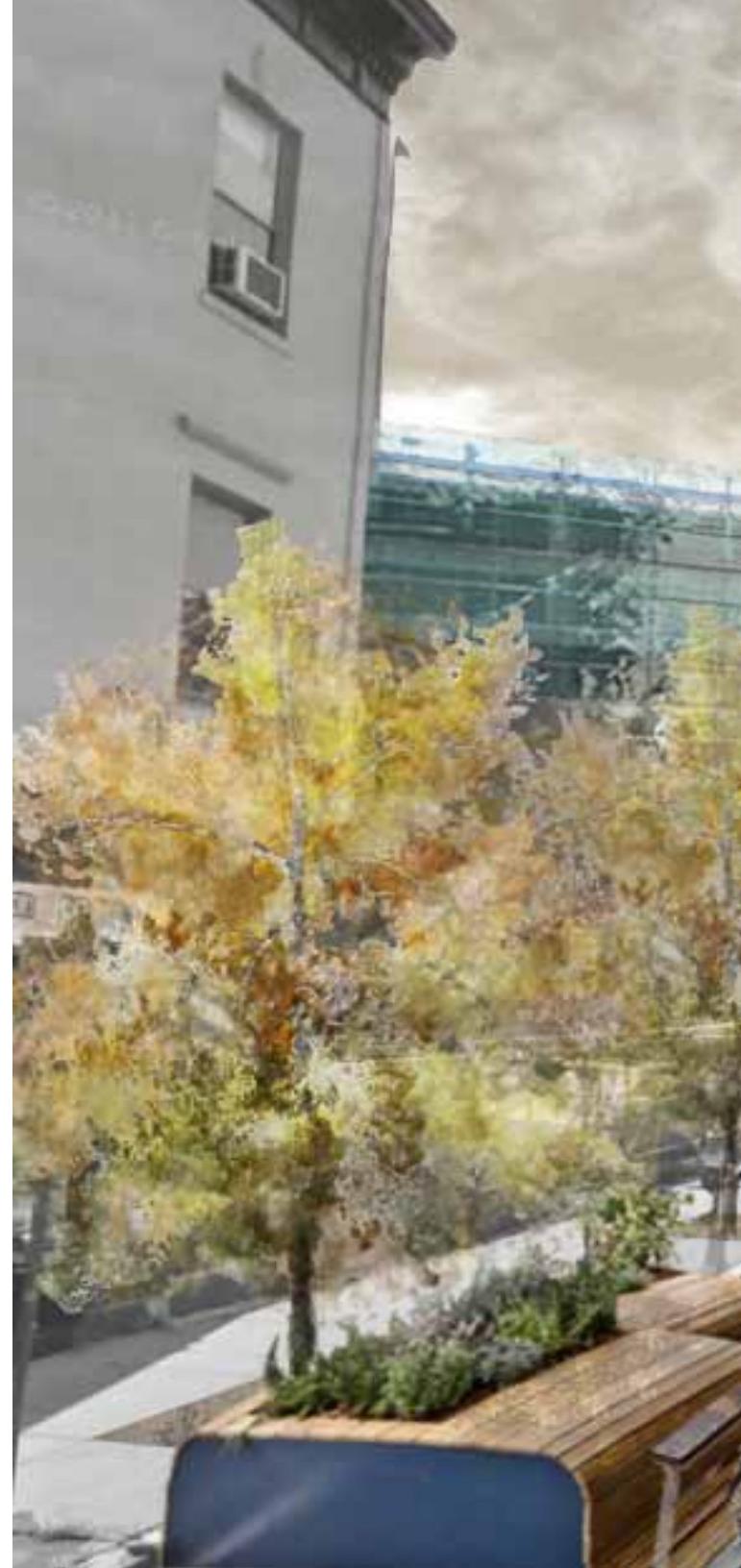
The progressive development of the city fabric creates a situation where the bridge cuts through both dense neighborhoods, merely feet from building facades, as well as large open expanses. This allows sections of the bridge hundreds of feet long to be visible to the residents of Chelsea. The city grid provides view corridors that frame the bridge from long distances.





▲ Visibility: Site lines indicating visible portions of the bridge corridor

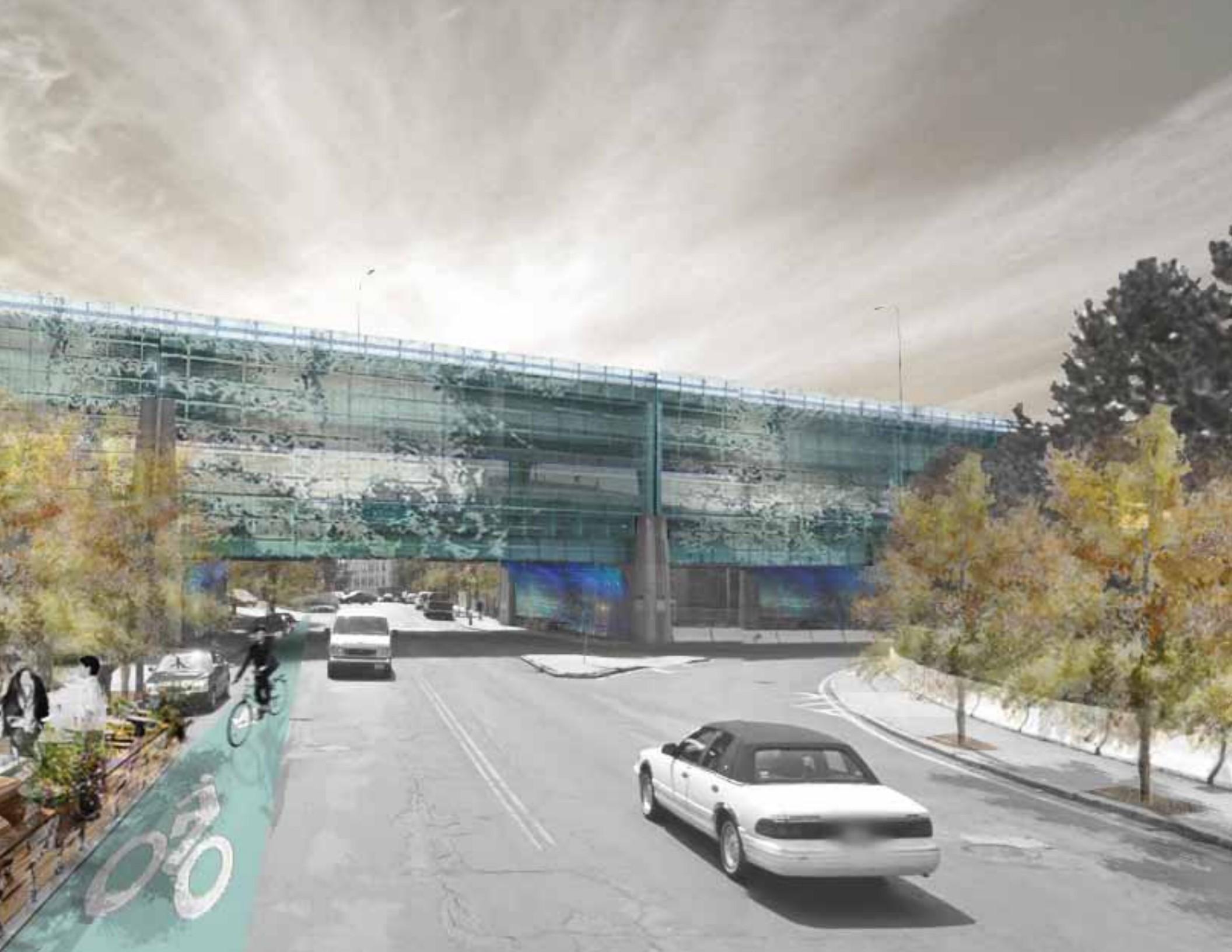




Everett Avenue

Northwest of Bridge

A major node and point of visibility, Everett Avenue is identified as an important intervention site along the expanse of the bridge. In combination with improvements to the streetscape along the Avenue, an installation on the facade of the bridge will bring new life and interest to the intersection. A kinetic sculpture made of thousands of acrylic squares reacts to the air currents created by the traffic on the bridge. Mesmerizing to watch, the bridge looks alive, like a river running through the city, as it ripples and reflects the activity within. (see p. 101-06 Appendix)

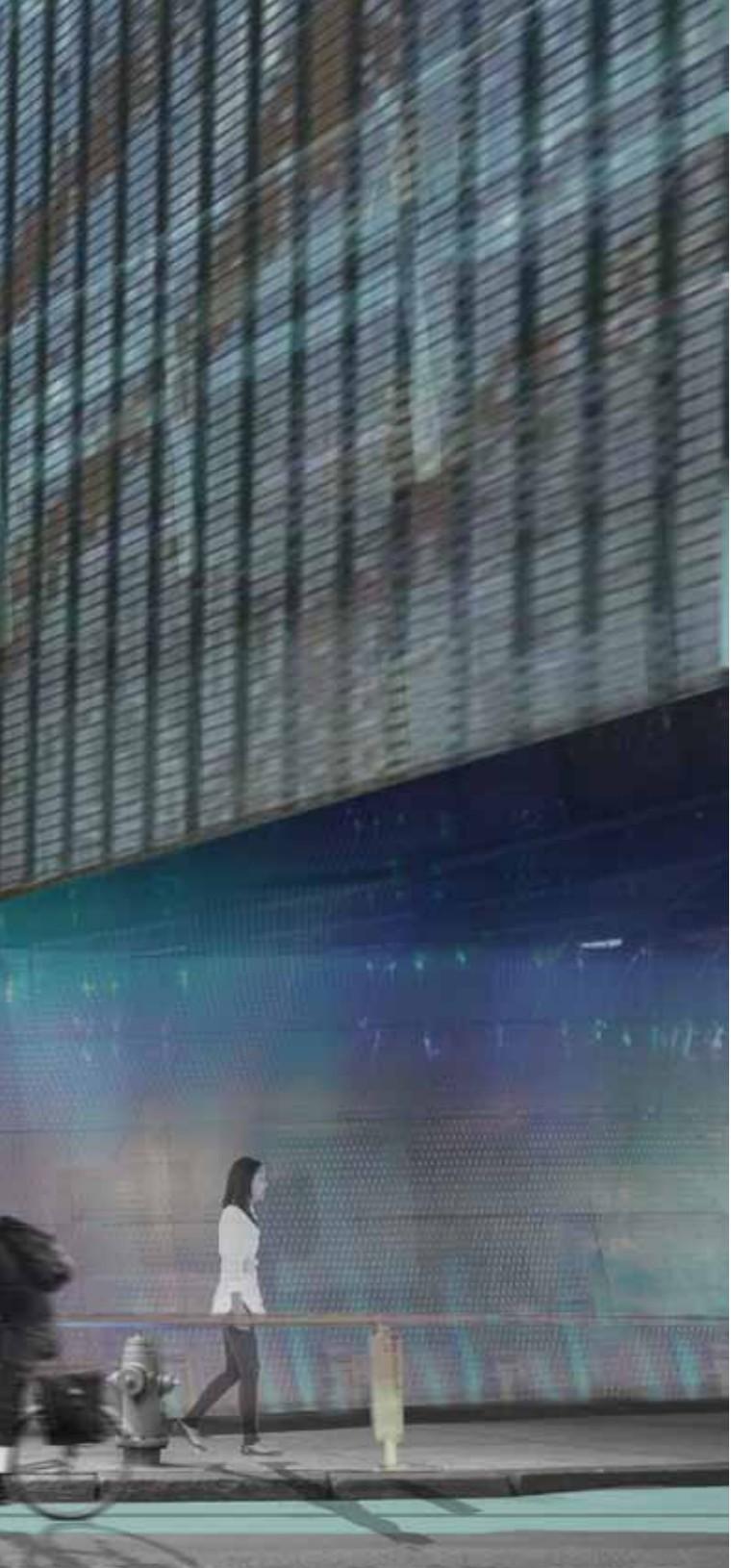




0.5 mi



1 mi



Everett Avenue

Southeast of Bridge

Everett Avenue is a major connection to the greater Chelsea Loop with routes running through the underpass along the avenue as well as a bike and pedestrian trail along the length of the bridge. This multi-use trail begins here at the Everett Avenue node, and continues toward Mary O'Malley Park (0.5 mi) and on to Boston via the marsupial bridge (1 mile). Lighting, rails, plantings, and signage all work together to make a safe and invigorating experience. (p. 101-06 Appendix)



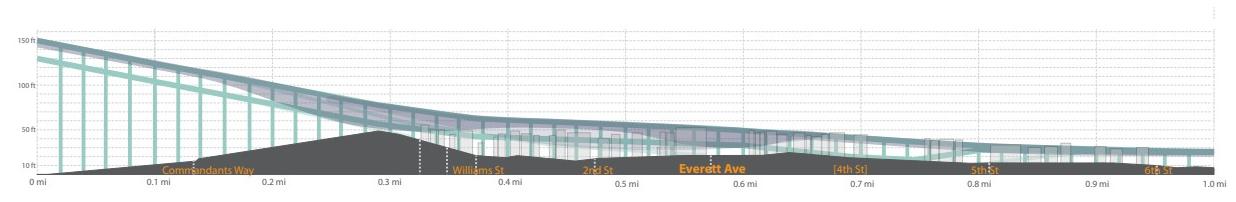
Route 1 Northbound *@ Everett Avenue*

The view from the interior of the bridge is just as mesmerising as that of the exterior. The commuter is exposed to the kinetic installation as it drapes in rhythm and hides and reveals views of Chelsea. The structural bones of the installation act as a protective measure as well, preventing debris from escaping the fast-paced expressway. (p. 101-06 Appendix)





▲ *Fourth Street*



▲ *Section illustrating the draping of the installation over the bridge.*



▲ Walnut Street Glimpse

The installation will expand and contract with visibility but will always remain present to some degree, maintaining continuity of the bridge along the one mile stretch through Chelsea. While areas such as the Everett Avenue node require a more major intervention, the small glimpses have a scaled down version of it.





▲ Thresholds: Points of penetration along the bridge.



▲ Top Left: Pine Street
Top Middle: Mary O’ Malley Park
Top Right: 5th Street / Middle School
Bottom: Everett Avenue

Underpass Conditions

Among the limited thresholds along the Tobin Bridge, each has its own set of conditions. The height of the bridge fluctuates from a soaring 100 ft at Commandments Way to touching ground between Everett Avenue and 5th Street. The different conditions come with their own sets of obstacles: noise, safety, visibility, accessibility and scale. A series of interventions, ranging from temporary or seasonal to larger, permanent changes respond to the various conditions and activate the underutilized space beneath the bridge.





*Vegetation/Topsoil Mix
Growing Medium
Root Barrier
Composite Base
Wood Palette
Hydraulic Leveling Jacks*



Palette Parks

Designed as a modular system, the Palette Park introduces strategic green space to the community as needed that can be subsequently removed when it is no longer wanted or necessary. The modular units fit within frequently underused or temporarily empty locations and are one strategy of bringing greenery to spaces that otherwise may not support plant life due to soil quality or limited sunlight (such as under-bridge conditions). A palette park may be a popular spot along a street in the summer, but can then be removed in the winter for plowing and streetparking. The Palette Park system would promote community involvement in the placement and design of public green space and, where successful, could lead to permanent installations throughout the city.



Williams Street

Williams Street crosses under a long expanse of paved open space beneath the bridge. The Chelsea Loop multi-use trail will run through this area on its way to Mary O'Malley Park. It is also the site where the marsupial bridge takes off along the belly of the Tobin providing a pedestrian and bike connection to Downtown Boston. (see p. 109 Appendix) This would be an ideal site for temporary and seasonal use in the form of weekly farmers' markets, bazaars, and palette park installations. (see p. 101-02 Appendix) Lighting and streetscape improvements would make the area more inviting and accessible at all times.









5th Street

Currently, the 5th Street underpass is used as a parking lot for the nearby middle school. While heavily used during the school year, the lot is virtually empty during the summer months. Seasonal events such as a weekly food truck assembly would activate this space during its vacant months. (see p. 104 Appendix)



Mary O'Malley Park

One of the most spectacular views of the Tobin Bridge is from Mary O'Malley Park. The enormous structure looms overhead, and the entire expanse of the bridge is visible as it crosses over the Mystic River and disappears into the skyline of downtown Boston. The iconic structure is celebrated here as it is poured over with colored light, making it a beacon in the night sky: the gateway to Chelsea. (see p. 106 Appendix)







THE GATEWAY

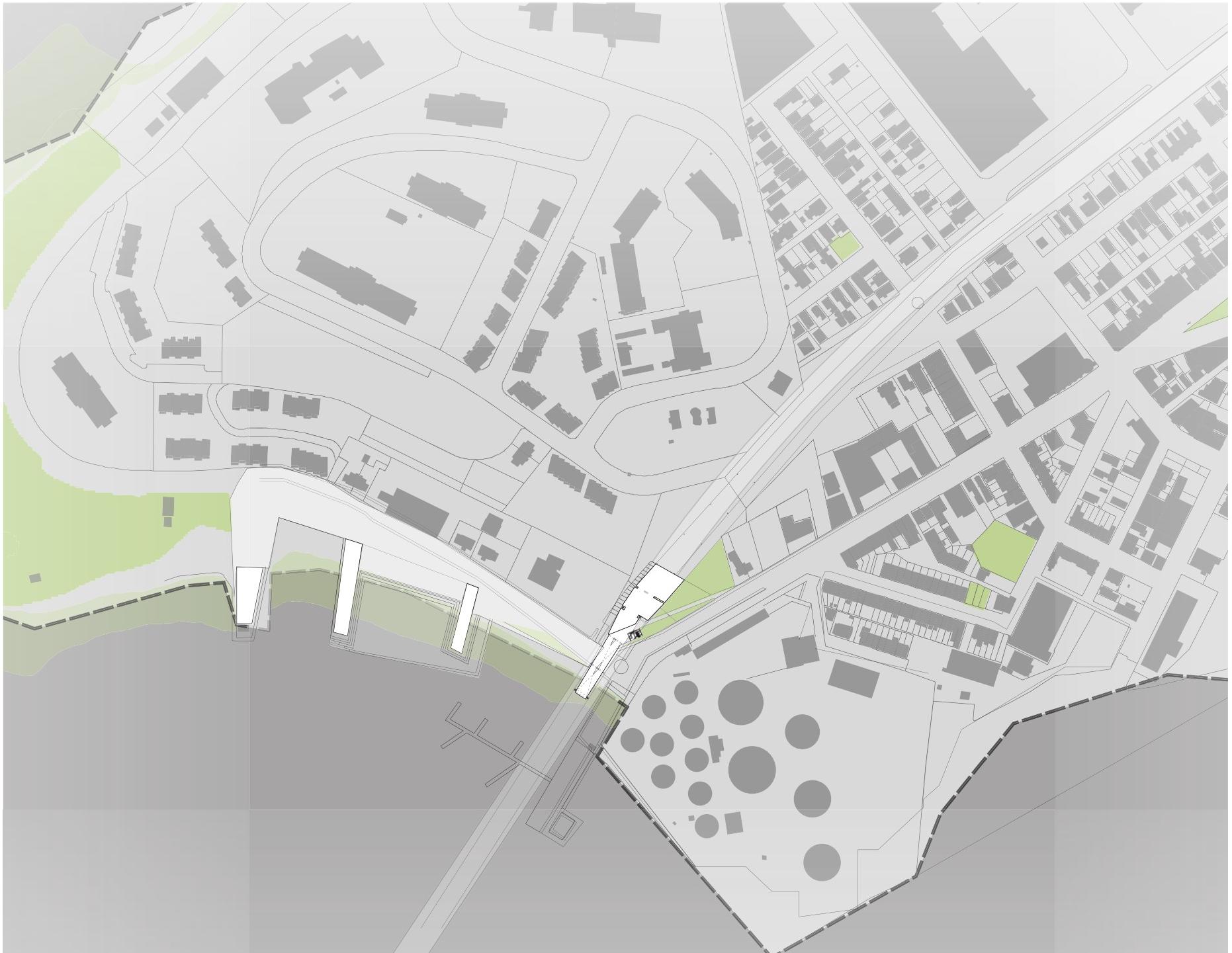
Mary O'Malley Park is a great escape for the residents of Chelsea. Unfortunately, the park is isolated due to its location, poor access routes, and lack of parking. Also, the resident's of Admiral Hill view the park as a private amenity.

The connection between two areas, Mary O'Malley as a recreational area and Broadway as a cultural hub, disappeared through the construction of the Tobin Bridge. The relationship of scale between the bridge, street, and pedestrian also thins the connection. The objective of the proposal aims to blur the edges of the two communal districts. The introduction of an intermediate communal hub nested under the bridge will enhance the understanding of the pedestrian path underneath the bridge.

The communal space under the bridge starts to formulate a language of piers/event spaces on the waterfront to strengthen the human-to-water relation. This not only becomes a place to gather, but also creates a safer environment under the bridge. A vertical circulation core is considered a method to mediate the scale and allow views out to the city.

The gateway becomes a node of play; a place for communities to gather.







▲ Numbers on drawing correspond to phasing.

Program

1. Palette Park Intervention
2. Farmer's Market- Vendors
3. Information Kiosk
Skate Park
Movie Projection
Sledding Slope
Parking
Vertical Connection to Marsupial Bridge
4. Pedestrian Observation Overlook
5. Interactive Water Features Pier
6. Recreation Field Pier
7. Ferry Pier



▲ Broadway and Commandants Way.

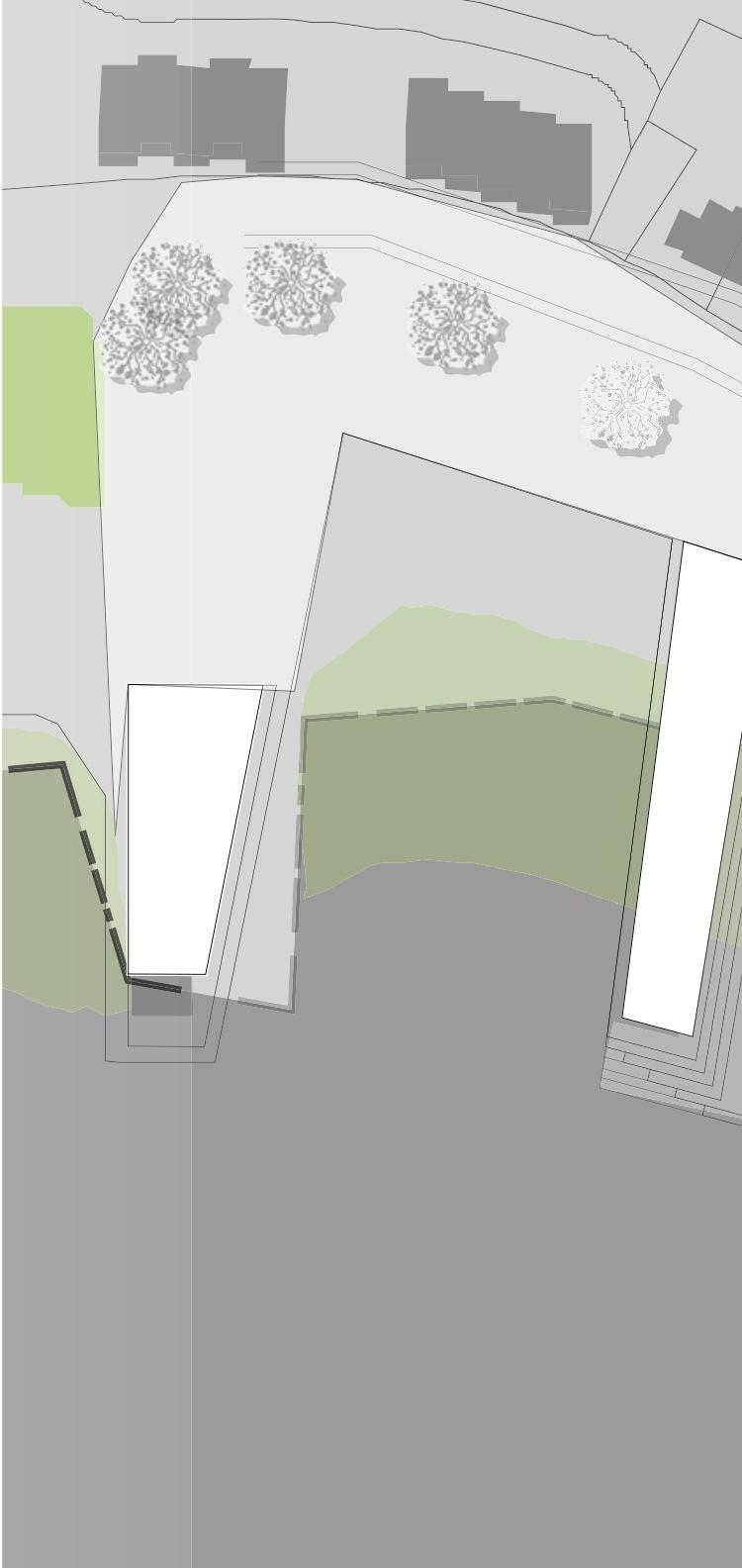
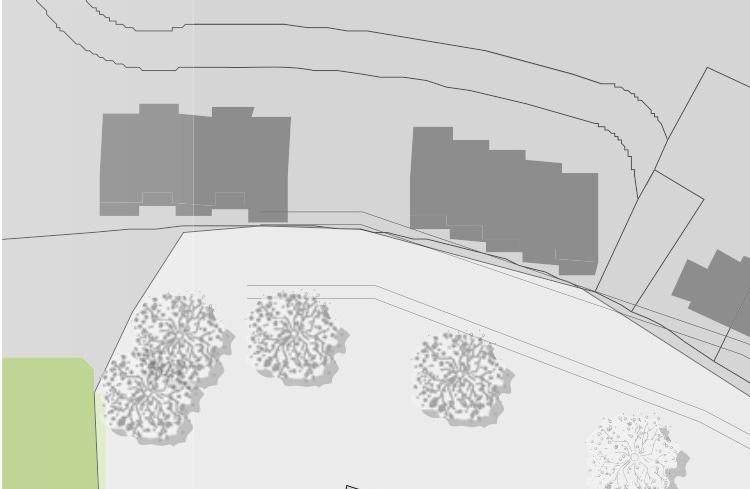
Phase 1

Phase 1 includes several actions and design strategies with short implementation durations. These strategies include:

- Preserving and improving the street facade of Broadway by adding art walls, painting doors, and brick streets.
- Adding palette parks and trees to improve the streetscape.
- Adding lighting to address safety concerns
- Implementing bike lanes along Broadway and Commandants Way.
- Adding parallel parking along Broadway.
- Introducing street vendors near the waterfront.
- Establishing a farmer's market where Broadway terminates.
- Redirecting truck traffic.











▲ View from the city owned lot under the Tobin Bridge.

Phase 2

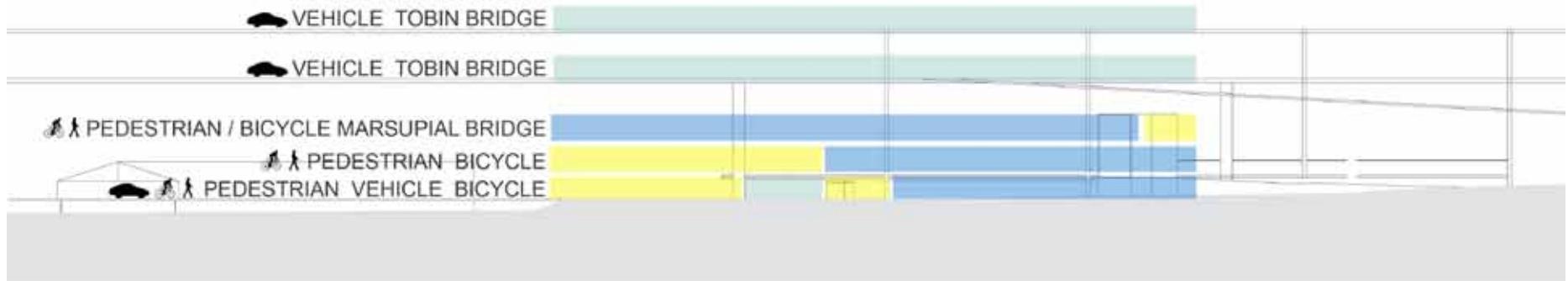
Phase 2 proposes longer term strategies:

- Boardwalk extension towards Mary O'Malley Park.
- Roundabout at intersection of Broadway and Commandant's Way.
- Movie projection under the bridge facing the Mystic River.
- Skate park.
- Sledding slope.
- Information Kiosk.
- Parking - Decking structure underneath bridge.
- Vertical connection to the marsupial bridge.



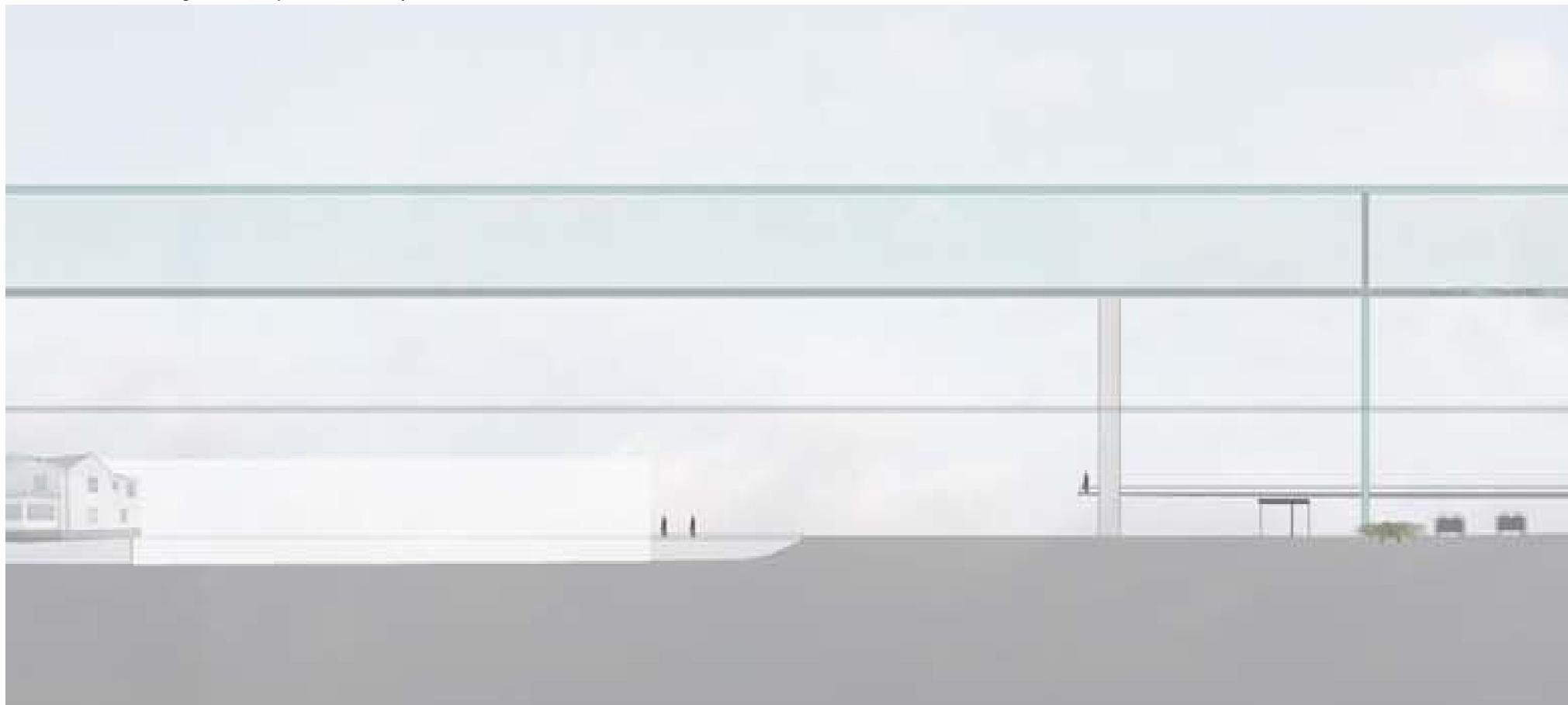


SKATE
PARK



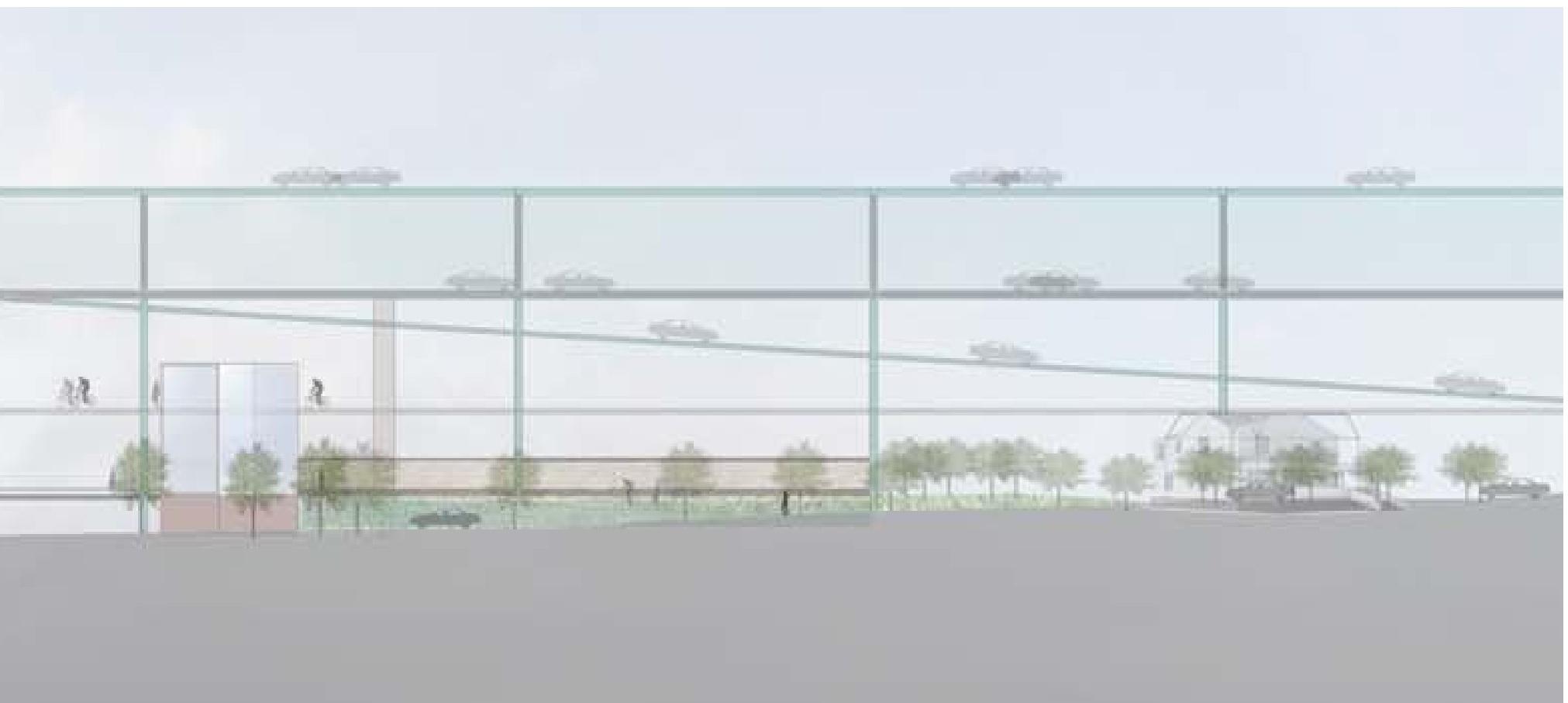
▲ Bridge layer diagram.

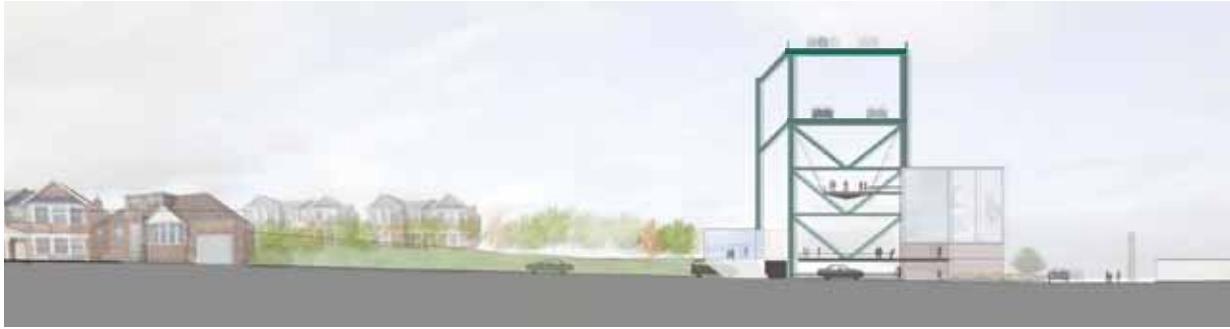
▼ Cross section through Broadway and the waterfront.





Section through the Tobin Bridge towards the Admiral's Hill ▲





Phase 3

Phase 3 introduces permanent program:

- Boardwalk extension towards the pier.
- Interactive water features.
- Recreation field.
- Reintroduction of ferry from Charleston to East Boston.
- Observation Tower along the pier.

▲Top: View of the Waterfront Park from Tobin Bridge.

Bottom: Section of Tobin Bridge and Commandants Way.





Chelsea, MA



Commandants Boardwalk current and future views



TO CROSS
STREET
USH BUTTON
WAIT FOR
WALK LIGHT

CHELSEA 2.0

GOALS:

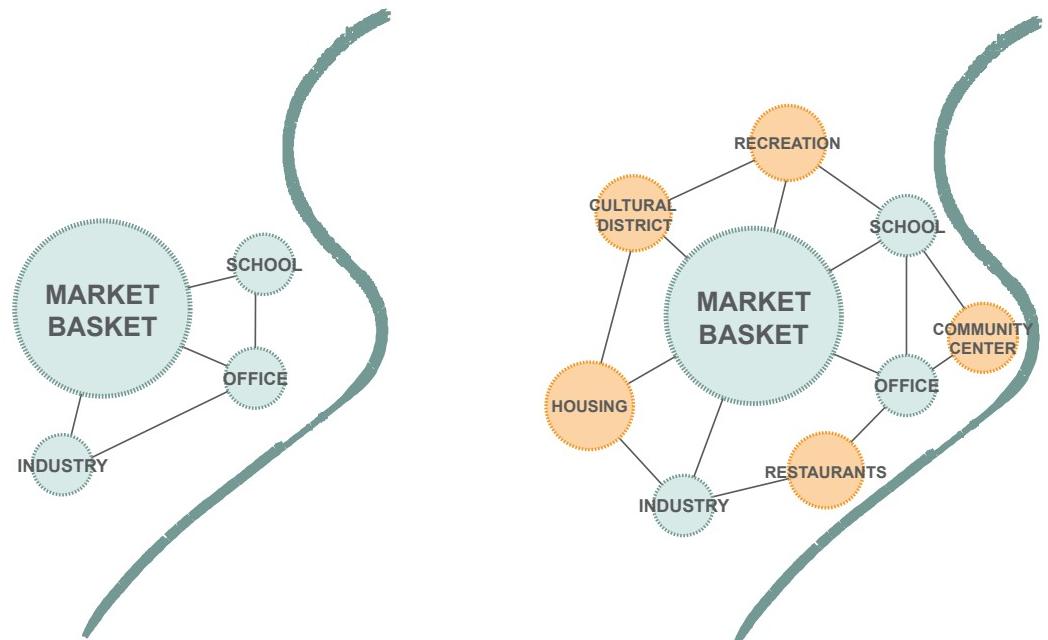
Connect Residential Areas to a Growing Hub of Amenities

Expand Offerings to Create a Place to Linger

Benefit the Surrounding Region While Serving Chelsea

Chelsea 2.0 builds off the current direction of development happening in the western half of the city. This growing hub of amenities includes a large Market Basket, TJ Maxx, a new Starbucks, and the Wyndham Boston Chelsea. While new development represents a great economic asset to the City of Chelsea, it faces several challenges. Its location to the west of the Tobin Bridge and south of the commuter rail segregates it from the dense surrounding residential areas. Further, the urban fabric in and around this area is automobile-oriented, and the shopping complex itself serves more as a one-point destination to which people come to shop but rarely linger.

Chelsea 2.0 therefore seeks to better connect residential areas to this growing hub of amenities and furthermore expand its offerings to create a place to live, work, and linger. While Chelsea 2.0 primarily seeks to serve the residents of Chelsea, it also aims to benefit the surrounding region in providing a unique and attractive destination rife with amenities.



The shopping center currently offers a limited diversity of offerings (left), which Chelsea 2.0 seeks to expand (right).



Analysis / Impressions

Several interrelated issues affect the shopping complex and surrounding area: buildings lack signage and other forms of aesthetic identity, many roads are wider than needed given traffic volume, and connections to key points such as the commuter rail are difficult or uninviting. In addition, the area contains leftover spaces which could be better used as parks or infill development. Finally, pedestrian and cyclist mobility are constrained, often as a result of the circulation of vehicles taking precedent. Chelsea 2.0 leverages these issues as opportunities to connect residents to this area and create a diverse destination while also serving the Boston community.





SCALE



CONNECTIONS



PEDESTRIAN
AMENITIES

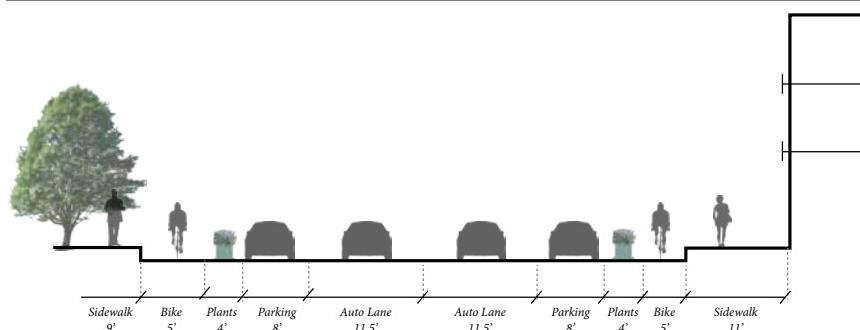


BICYCLE
AMENITIES

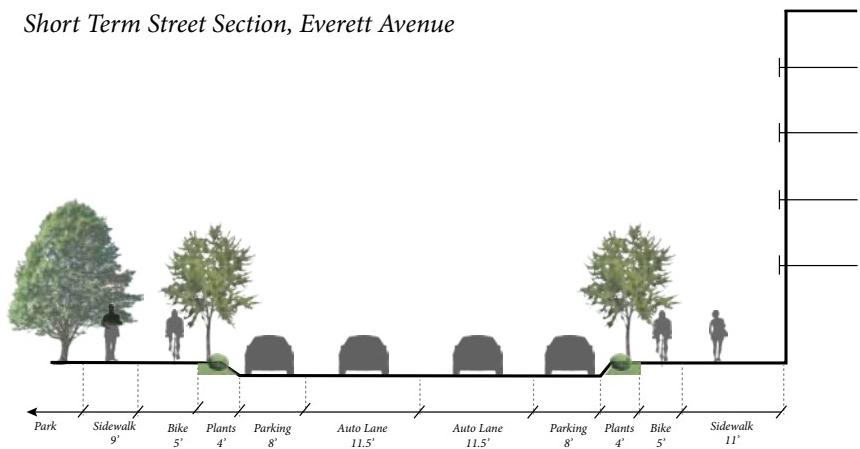


Short Term

Long Term



Short Term Street Section, Everett Avenue

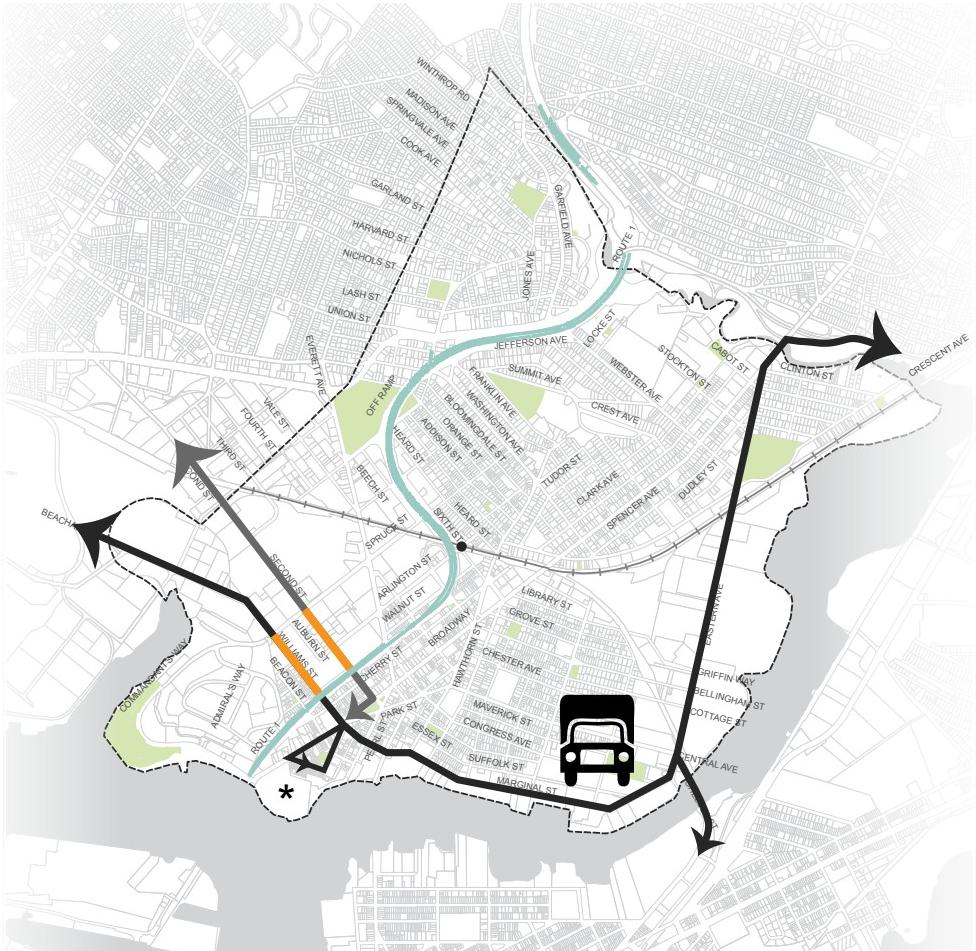


Long Term Street Section, Everett Avenue

The Short Term vs. Long Term

Many of the issues highlighted above can be addressed with solutions ranging from temporary or flexible installations to permanent infrastructure. Those implementable in the short term can have an immediate impact at a low cost, while those in the long term represent an ultimate goal or vision. Many of these are not mutually exclusive, but rather cumulative, and thus offer a potential for depth in resolving certain issues.

The palette of streetscaping improvements (above) could help to address many of the issues affecting this area of Chelsea. The street sections (left) illustrate the impact several of them could have on Everett Avenue. These solutions, coupled with additional efforts, such as rerouting the heavy truck traffic (described right), could have a lasting impact on key corridors in Chelsea.



Residential Areas Along Truck Routes

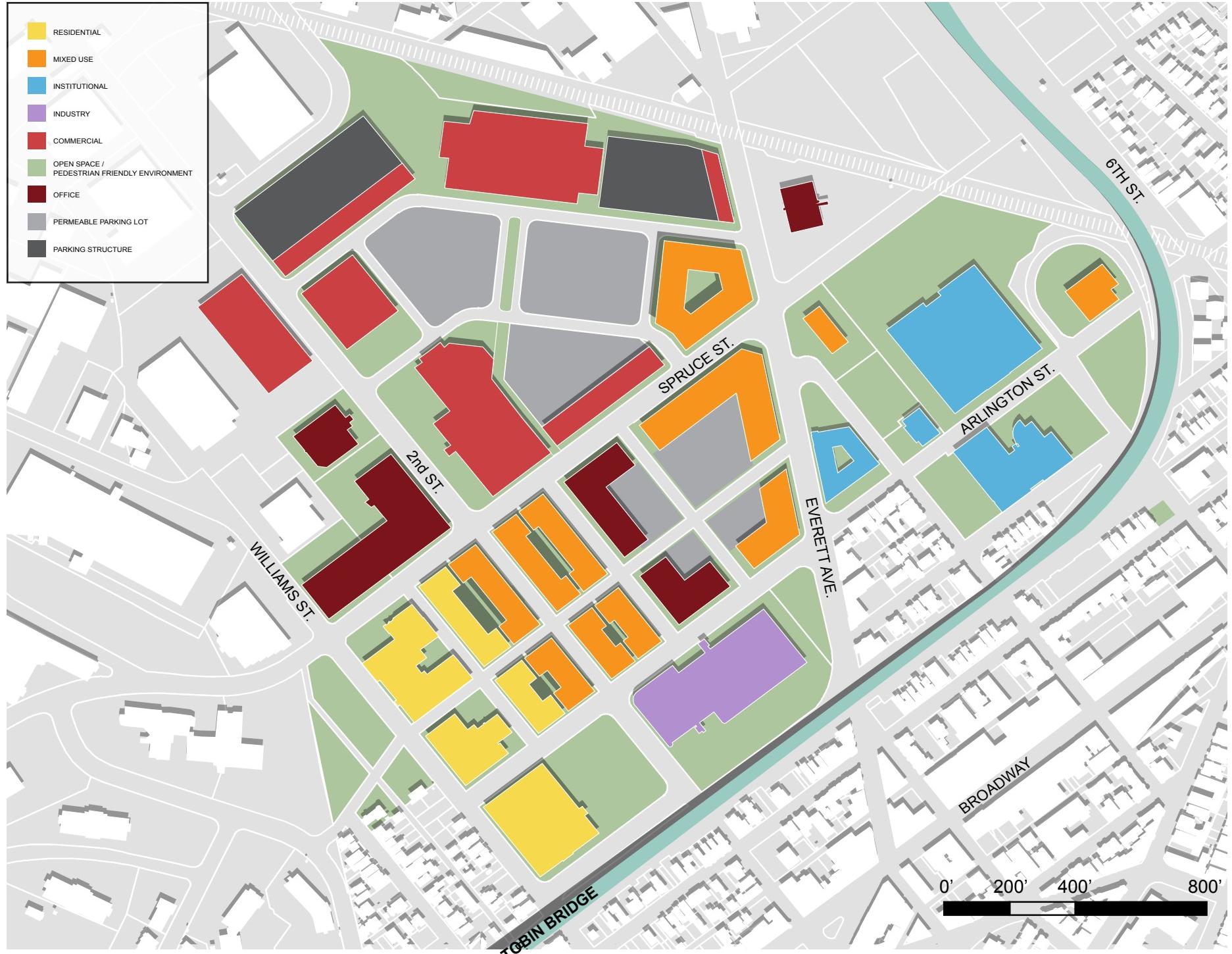
Chelsea 2.0 suggests an expansion of the residential fabric to Williams Street (indicated in orange, left). Currently, this street experiences a high volume of truck traffic originating from the light industrial and warehousing district to the northeast. Chelsea 2.0 suggests restricting traffic to the refueling facility to daytime hours (bottom left) and rerouting traffic to the Revere Beach Parkway (bottom right).

- Trucks pass through Chelsea to both refuel in the south (indicated by the asterisk) and avoid tolls.

Restrict Truck Travel During the Day

Re-Routing to Revere Beach Parkway







▲ Existing Land Use.

▼ Proposed Program.



Land Use

The site's existing conditions consist of low density industrial, light industrial, and warehousing uses. As this development occurred, one- to three-story buildings surrounded by large surface parking lots were established. The site's northern region includes commercial and retail uses, including the supermarket giant, Market Basket. The area is reminiscent of a suburban office park rather than an urbanized district.

Chelsea 2.0 calls for this area to be transformed into a livable, walkable environment. To correspond with this change, land uses and building densities will evolve, and Market Basket will anchor the emerging neighborhood. "Lifestyle center" retail typologies will infill the immediate surrounding area and replace the remnants of the Mystic Mall. To relieve the added demand for parking, structured parking garages will be adjacent to the Market Basket on either side, but parts of the current parking lot will be preserved. To ensure a safer environment, pedestrian-only routes will promote walkability throughout the area. Mixed-use development near the MBTA commuter rail stop will further Chelsea's goal of establishing itself as a "bedroom community" for Boston. Everett Avenue will transform from its current state and morph into a true mixed-use corridor, with retail, office, and community facilities, thus providing a strong connection for those traveling from the southern side of the Tobin Bridge. Residential development will dramatically increase in the area, establishing new homes for thousands of residents, and ground level retail will activate the street.

Phasing

The phasing for Chelsea 2.0 begins with flexible, impactful solutions that could be implemented in the short term along Everett Avenue and Arlington Street, two key corridors in the area. These Phase 1 solutions will enhance these streets for pedestrians and cyclists and thus facilitate connections to the shopping district and commuter rail station (indicated with an asterisk, right). Phase 2 enhances the community and commercial offerings in the area while further improving the pedestrian environment. Finally, Phase 3 aims to further integrate this hub of amenities into the surrounding community by redeveloping Everett Avenue to include more mixed-use buildings and by adding more residential communities to the area south of the shopping district. This phase represents a longer-term vision, as it will involve significant changes to the built environment, including the renewal of office buildings along Everett Avenue and the division of certain superblocks to create a more walkable environment.

Phase 1:

Focus on Everett Avenue and Arlington Street

- Planters
- Temporary Parklets
- Bike Lanes

Phase 2:

Community Center/ Community Garden

Pedestrian Pathway Connection

Commercial and Retail Development: Mystic Mall

- High density residential communities proximate to commuter rail
- Structured garage
- Permeable parking lots
- Additional streetscape improvements

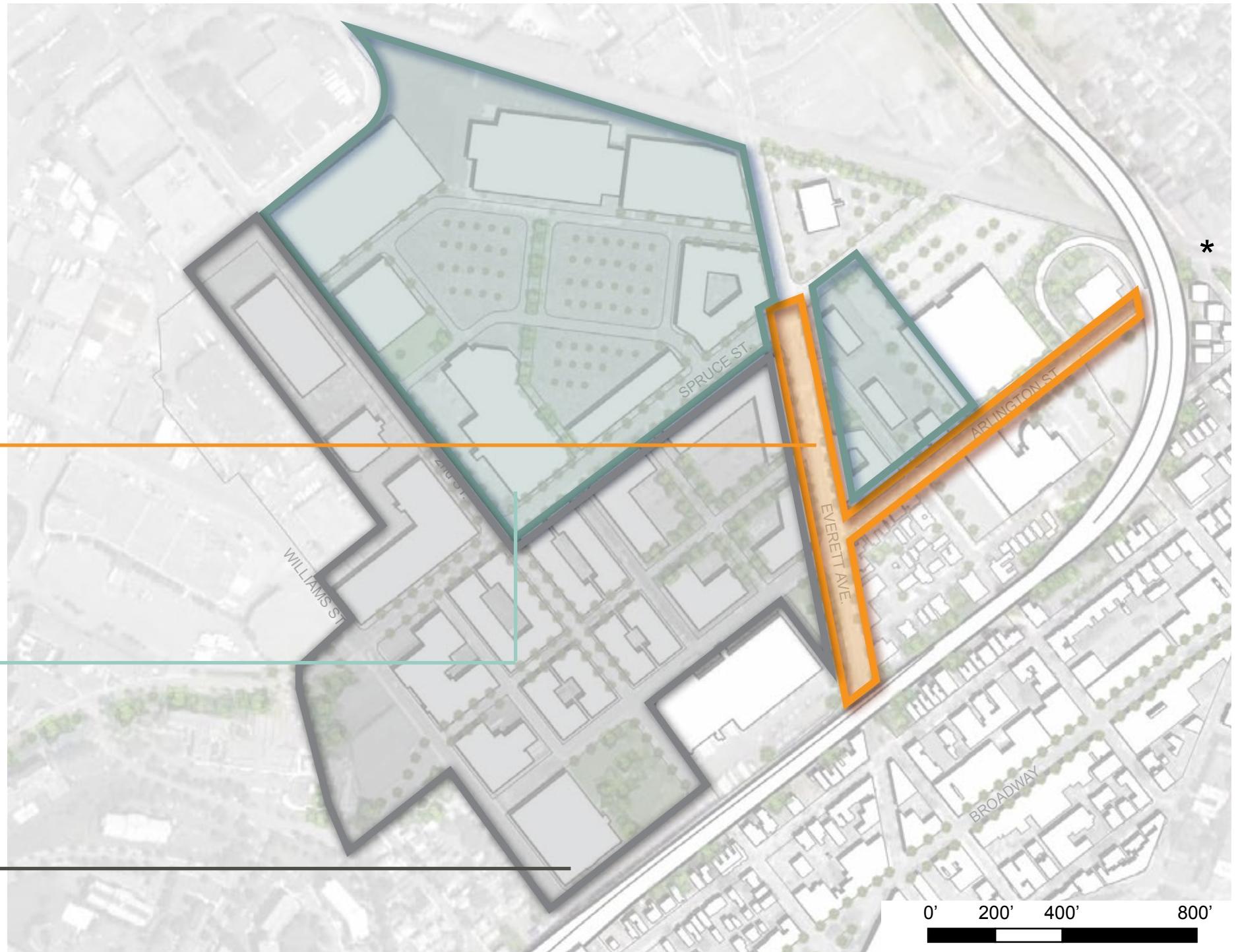
Phase 3:

Everett Avenue Redevelopment

Residential Area/ Historical District

- Divide super blocks

- Road connection with Admiral Hill





▲ Everett Avenue Northbound to Market Basket
(Image Credit: Google Streetview).

Phase 1: Everett Avenue Streetscape

@ Everett and Arlington

Everett Avenue is a main arterial road bringing residents from the east to the commercial west, but the scale of the street does not promote a healthy pedestrian to vehicle relationship. The Everett Avenue Streetscape looks to re-organize and re-program the avenue to support a safer environment and promote walkability. Because Everett Avenue serves as a commercial spine in Chelsea, increasing the building quality and vegetation along the corridor will greatly improve the urban fabric.









▲ Looking South from Market Basket towards Starbucks and TJ Maxx.

Phase 2: Commercial Retail District

A greener development

Phase 2 establishes a walkable corridor which stretches from TJ Maxx and Starbucks to the Market Basket. Strategies suggested to enhance this improvement and alleviate pedestrian and vehicular conflict are traffic calming devices (speed tables), increased vegetation, and permeable parking lots. The permeable parking lots include bioswales and rain gardens to manage greywater runoff and pollution from cars.



▲ Vacant Parcel on 2nd Street.

Phase 3: 2nd Street

Reconfigure and Repurpose

With its beautiful brick street and light industrial warehouses, Second Street embodies the historical and industrial character of Chelsea. This corridor, however, contains abandoned and underused buildings, and thus is not developed to its fullest potential. The inherent value of the area could be harnessed through transforming these buildings into a mixed-use community with cafes and shops occupying the ground level and residential lofts above.

In addition, the scale of the street lends itself to a livable, walkable environment. Parks, either temporary or permanent, could occupy any existing vacant lots and enhance this environment. The pocket parks would connect to the wider loop system and offer a social gathering space for both residents and visitors, thus enabling social interaction that would reinvigorate the community.







BRANDING

Communities contain traces of how they were formed. These traces are a reflection of the people living in the community and represent a community's identity. A clear, forward-looking identity unifies a community and draws newcomers. An identity is strongest when it poses the question, "What makes YOU different?"

A branding strategy symbolizes a community, represents the people, and summarizes thousands of stories. The proposed strategy asks the question, "What makes CHELSEA different?"

The proposal identifies Chelsea through the design and application of a logo, a 2030 Chelsea Tour Map, a way-finding system, and a community-wide event, "Paint Your Community."

The Icon

The proposed logo for Chelsea celebrates the Tobin Bridge and establishes it as an icon rather than an eyesore. The iconic bridge logo corresponds with the proposed interventions along, on, and under the bridge, but also with the bridge's continuous presence. The strategy behind the selection of the logo relates Chelsea with its newest asset, the improved Tobin Bridge.



▲ Chelsea logo.



► Illustrating potential Chelsea amenities and locations.



▲ Illustrating potential Chelsea amenities and locations.



► Left: Chelsea 2030 walking map.

▼ Bottom: Signage locating different districts and amenities in Chelsea.

Chelsea 2030

The map on the left illustrates potential walking routes and landmarks in a futuristic Chelsea. The map highlights the proposed “loops” through the city and denotes points of interest and activities along the loops. The map also suggests the possibility of a local shuttle to travel the loops and facilitate pedestrian movement through the city. The graphic is a collection of all the proposals, and illustrates the vision’s idea in a relateable way.

Signage and Wayfinding

The proposal defines an overall framework and smaller-scale interventions to work together to form a cohesive plan. These small interventions create an opportunity to develop signage strategies. Each sign's color corresponds to the area in which it applies. Residents and visitors of Chelsea will easily recognize the colors and navigate Chelsea with ease.





Painting Your Community

The illustration (left) portrays a scene of Chelsea residents painting their community. This simple activity provides a vehicle in which people can express themselves. The activity establishes a sense of engagement, a connection between people and the pride of place and self. This activity is a simple practice and an innovative and refreshing idea to reconnect neighborhoods and bring the city together.



◀ *Left: Painting your community.*

IMPLEMENTATION

The vision plan establishes a framework for implementing a variety of outdoor programs, building programs, and installations over a period of 10+ years. As Chelsea begins to encounter new issues, prioritizing the solutions needed most is important. The phasing strategies suggested are flexible and provide a framework for the implementation of the proposal.

1. Identify Chelsea's goals and strengths.

Understanding Chelsea's strengths and the city's objectives will help pinpoint specific issues in need of attention. The design will be receptive to the city's strengths and establish better community connections.

2. Engage the community.

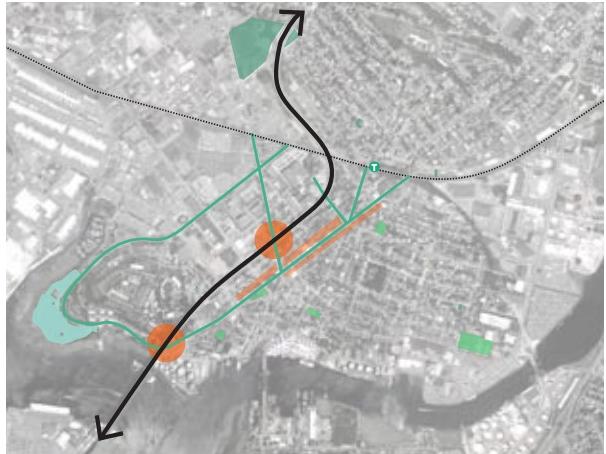
The plan aims to engage the community and understand its need to establish a design aimed to improve the life of Chelsea residents. Engaging the community gives a personal account of areas lacking communal connections.

3. Strengthen and connect major interest areas.

After understanding the community's needs and disconnected areas, the areas are strengthened through a network of safe, walkable connections. These connections will further reinforce the community and establish better access to amenities of Chelsea.

4. Develop beyond scope to establish larger scale connections and address major infrastructural issues.

Chelsea's proximity to Boston and other amenities presents the need for regional connections. The infrastructure of the area must be improved to enhance this connectivity.



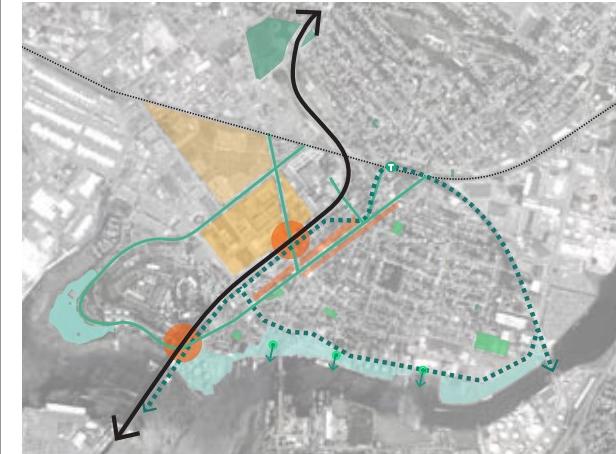
Phase 1: Immediate (0-5 years)

- Introduction of temporary program.
- Repurpose existing, underutilized space.
- Establish circulatory paths/trails.
- Re-identify Chelsea through branding strategies.



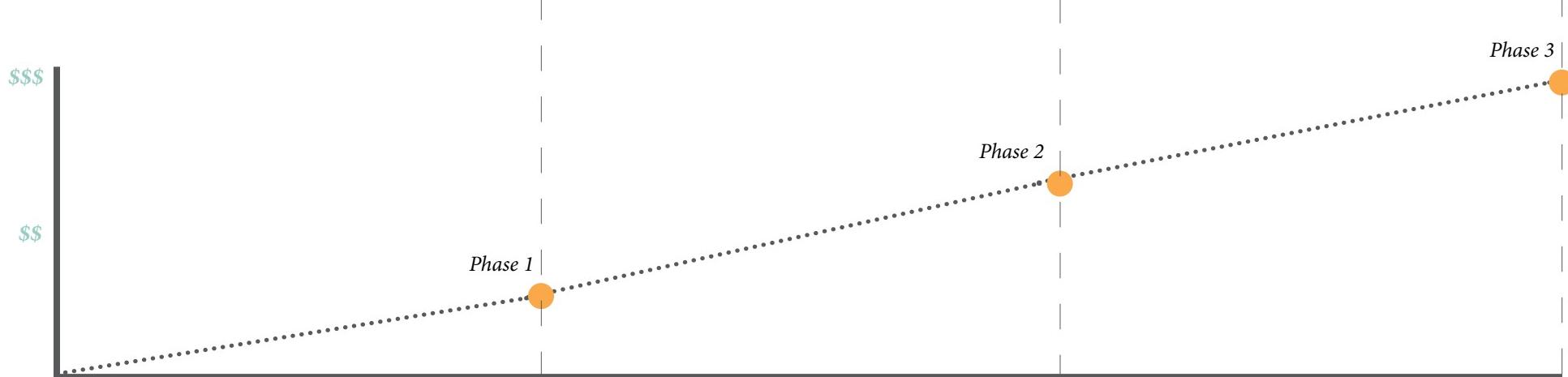
Phase 2: Intermediate (3-10 years)

- Establish new pocket parks.
- Strengthen major corridors.
- Establish a secondary circulation loop to further connect the residential area.
- Develop smaller waterfront access points.
- Occupy space/nodes with long term program.

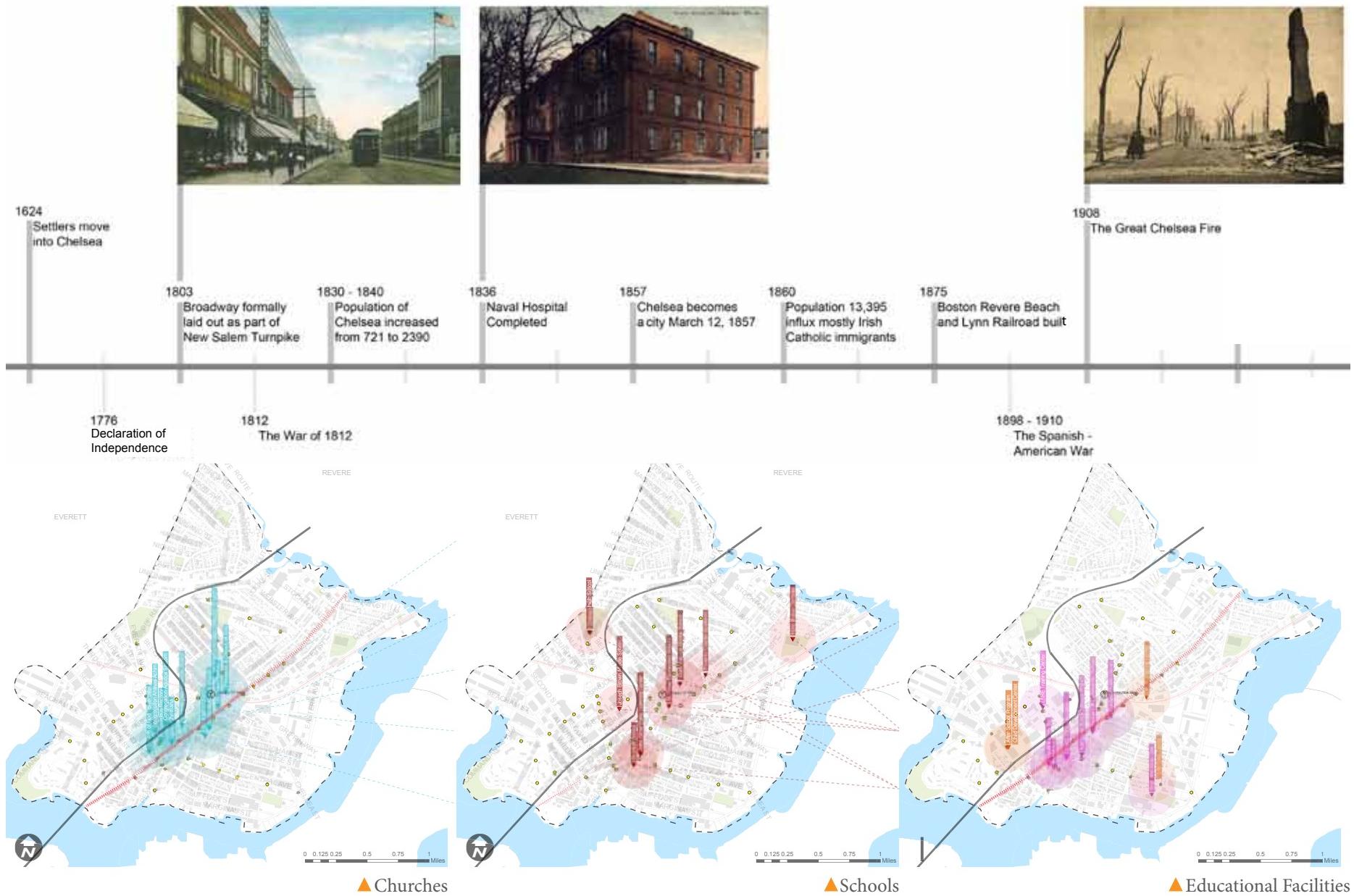


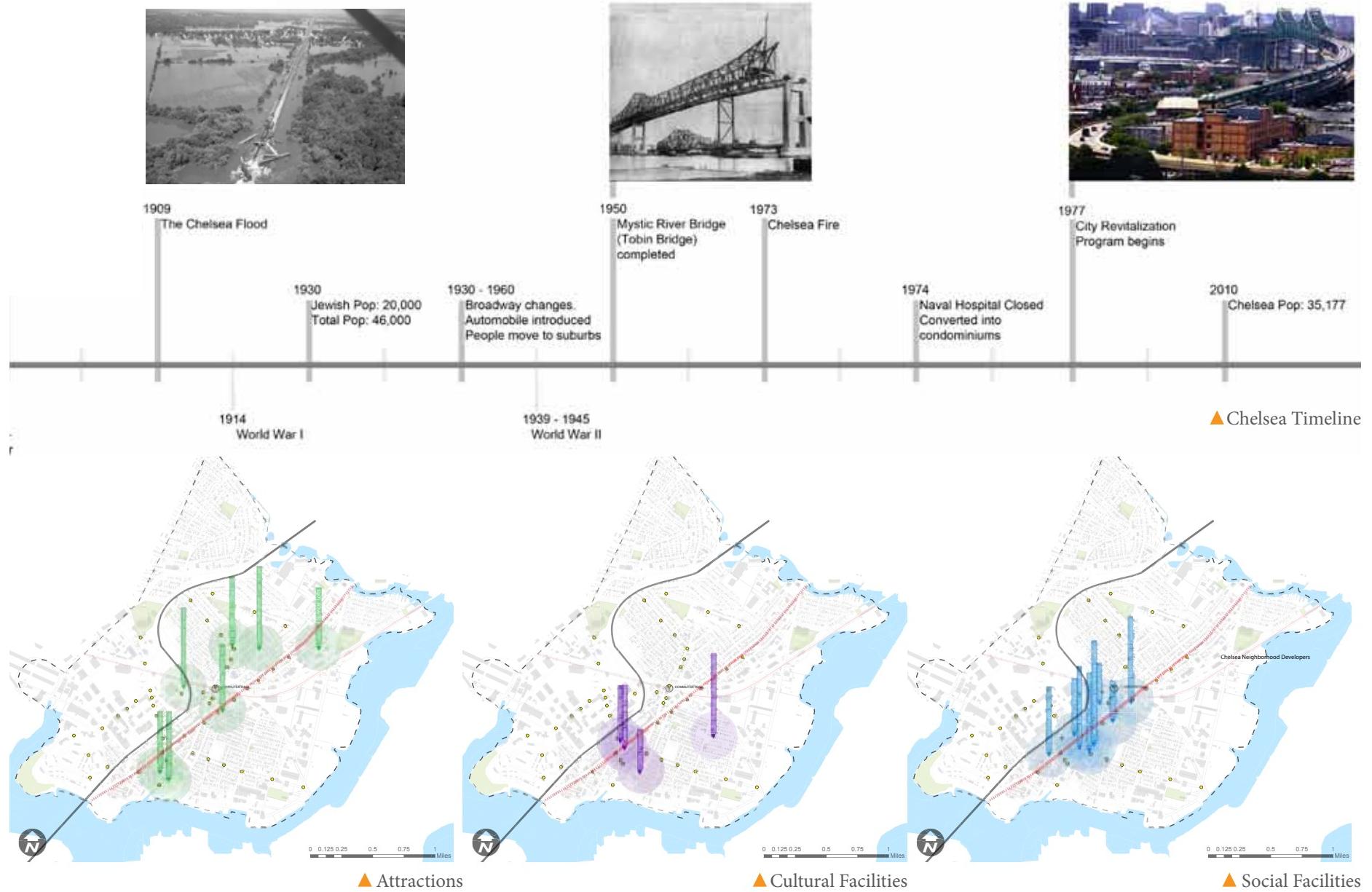
Phase 3: Long Term (10 + years)

- Establish walkable, bikeable circulation loop connecting waterfront, commercial development, and residential neighborhoods.
- Establish permanent outdoor and building program.
- Sustained promotion of Chelsea's identity and further community development.



APPENDIX







Underpass Farmer's Market
Oakland, CA



Underpass Food Trucks
San Francisco, CA

Parks on Wheels,
San Francisco ►



Parklet,
San Francisco ►





◀ Des Moines, IA



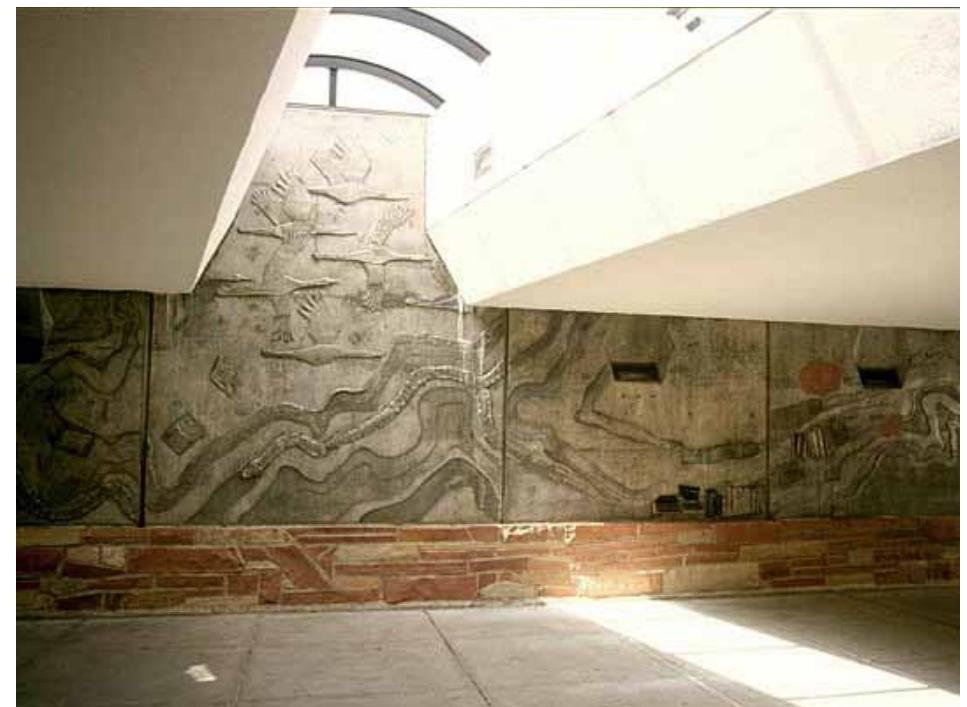
► Birmingham, AL



▼ Austin, TX



Yorkshire, England ▲



Boulder, CO ►

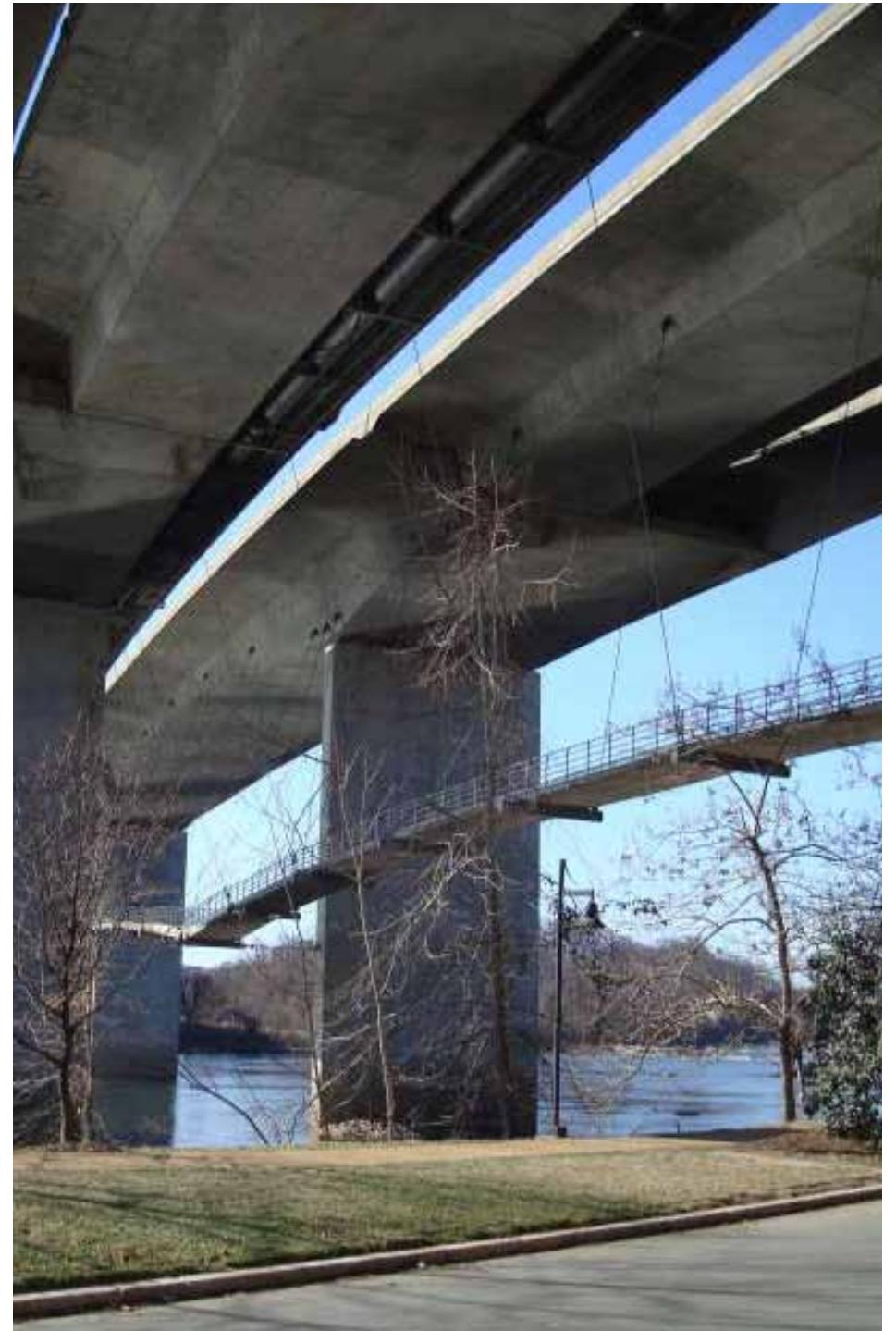


◀ Ned Kahn
Vertical Canal, 2008
Rijkswaterstaat, Utrecht, Netherlands



◀ Wind Veil by Ned Kahn
Charlotte, NC

Marsupial bridge ►
Richmond, VA



Vertical Canal by Ned Kahn
▼ Utrecht, Netherlands



Resources:

www.city-data.com

Chelsea Open Space and Recreation Plan 2010-2016

City of Chelsea Community Development Plan, June 2004

Addison-Orange Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, August 31, 2009

North Bellingham Hill Revitalization Plan, October 2009

CSX RIGHT OF WAY Multi-Use Path Feasibility/Conceptual Design Study

Chelsea Gateway Center Infrastructure Improvements Plan Development Opportunities, September 2011

Gerrish Avenue / Bellingham Street Neighborhood Action Plan, October 2007

Chelsea Collaborative, Orientation to Chelsea, 2009

Chelsea Art Walk www.charcoll.com

http://www.chelseama.gov/Public_Documents/index

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25/2513205.html>

Chelsea Historical Society, <http://www.olgp.net/chs/index.htm>

The Neighborhood Developers, <http://www.chelseand.org/about.chelsea.php>



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